

Jackson: The not-so-fresh prince of Bel Air?



WEEKEND, JANUARY 9-11, 2009

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Rainmen season preview

PM back to being upbeat on crisis

ECONOMY Prime Minister Stephen Harper was less gloomy about the economy Thursday, saying Canada was in a strong economic position compared with others and should be able to exit the recession relatively quickly.

The comments were noticeably more cheerful than those he made in an interview in mid-December, when he said he was very worried about the economy and speculated about the possibility of a depression.

Harper, who as recently as mid-October said he had a plan to avoid recession, now concedes there is no chance Canada can escape the global economic crisis. Ottawa has already made clear it will run budget deficits for the next few years. **REUTERS**

MORE COVERAGE PG 6



Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff speaks at the Halifax Chamber of Commerce town hall meeting at Neptune Theatre on Thursday.

Iggy on the trail?

Grit making election-like promises

PAUL MCLEOD
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Tax cuts, stimulus funding and EI reform was the vision Michael Ignatieff painted of his government Thursday in Halifax.

At a Halifax Chamber of Commerce Q&A session, the federal Liberal leader laid out what he would do in his first 100 days as prime minister.

"It's going to be very important to get stimulus into the Canadian economy fast. So we may be looking at tax cuts very quickly; tax cuts targeted at medium- and low-income (people) to boost their purchas-

"It's going to be very important to get stimulus into the Canadian economy fast. So we may be looking at tax cuts very quickly." Michael Ignatieff

ing power fast," said Ignatieff.

Ignatieff alluded to using one-time tax rebates to further increase spending power.

But he said he was most committed to permanent tax cuts for lower-income Canadians.

Billions of stimulus dollars in the United States have gone out so fast that officials have lost track of how it's all being spent. Ignatieff said he'd avoid that

problem in Canada by going through local governments.

"Let's get on the phones with every mayor in the country," said Ignatieff, who then pointed out Halifax Mayor Peter Kelly in the crowd.

"I phone you and I say, 'What do you need?' 'I've got a list,' Kelly quickly yelled back.

Many speculated the idea of a coalition government would be put on the

backburner once Ignatieff took over from former leader Stéphane Dion. Ignatieff repeated yesterday that he would only make a decision after seeing the Conservative budget.

But he also praised the idea of a coalition with the NDP, saying it managed to weaken Prime Minister Stephen Harper and may be necessary again.

"We fought back with a coalition instrument that backed him down the Hill," he said.

"The coalition achieved an enormous amount."

Ignatieff also promised to reform employment insurance to cut down waiting times.

Would you stand up to a racist?

STUDY When it comes to repudiation of racism, words speak louder than actions, according to a York University study that suggests people are far more tolerant of bigotry than they might express.

While they would clearly condemn racism in advance, the majority of non-black people would sit mute and indifferent as blatant acts of anti-black racism occurred before them, according to the

Toronto research, published Friday in the journal Science.

"People expect in a very deliberate fashion that they'll be offended by racism, that they'll censor or avoid racists," says York psychologist Kerry Kawakami, the study's lead author.

"But our (research) showed that that's not the case when they're actually placed in that situation," Kawakami says.

For the study, researchers placed three students in a classroom, one white, one black and one white or Asian.

And while two of the students, the black and one white, were in on the scheme, the third believed they were all there waiting for a study to begin.

The subjects in on the study would then verbally bash the black or Asian student using derogatory terms.

The study found that the planted bigot faced little or no reprisal from the majority of subject whites.

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Obama urges stimulus now

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Six degrees of separation

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Local



Soothing sounds for your pooch

A dog CD? Now we've heard everything. Songs to Make Dogs Happy, featuring such hits as Squeakey Deakey, was recently launched by the L.A.-based Laurel Canyon Animal Co. to calm, rehabilitate and entertain ... dogs. Seriously. Creators say it was tested on dog focus groups in the U.S. Visit www.petcds.com to hear a sample.

METRO HALIFAX

In search of intelligent life

RACHEL BOOMER
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Sorry, folks: you probably won't be picking up an extraterrestrial pen pal before you die.

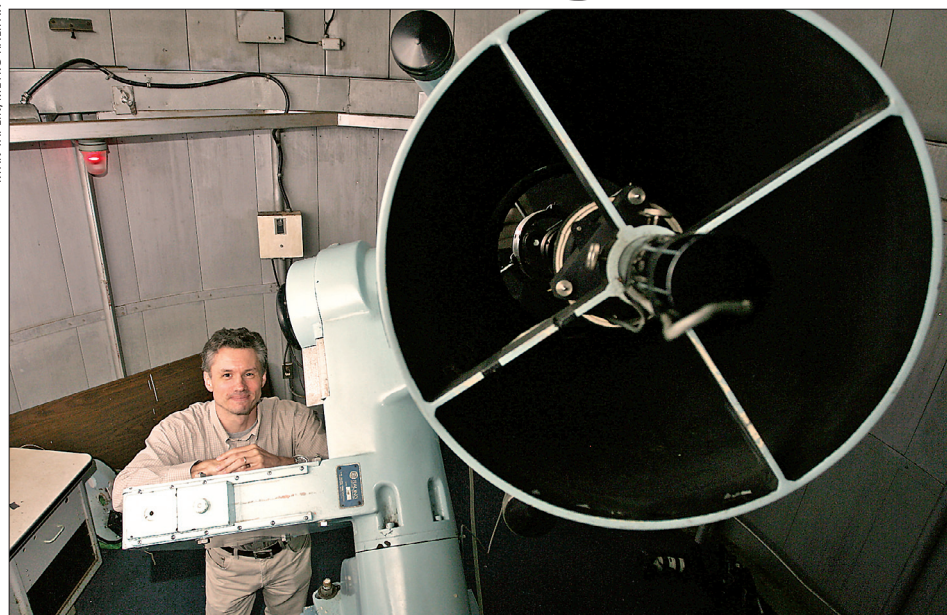
But way before that, we'll know where the planets are that could support life, says Saint Mary's University astronomy and physics Prof. Rob Thacker.

"By the time the 30-year-olds of today are 50, we'll know a good deal about life on other planets," Thacker said.

"Someone was saying to me, 'Do you think they'll be able to join us on Facebook?' But if they're that intelligent, they've probably moved on to the next thing past it."

Currently, we don't know how many Earth-sized planets there are, because the telescopes we have can't see them. We can see larger planets, but anything the size of Jupiter or Saturn is too big to support life — they don't have solid ground or atmosphere.

By 2015, there'll be a new telescope — appropriately



Saint Mary's astronomy and physics professor Rob Thacker seen at the Burke-Gaffney Observatory on the SMU campus on Thursday.

named the Extremely Large Telescope, or ELT — that will be able to detect Earth-sized planets. By 2025, we'll be able to train our new terrestrial planet-finder on those to see which ones have oxygen.

If there's oxygen, there may be life. But that could be something as small as a single-cell amoeba. And if

there's a more evolved species that wants to keep to itself, we'll never know.

"I'll be surprised if we find any basic life forms within 100 to 150 light years," Thacker said.

So, could it turn out the species that brought you Paris Hilton and Sarah Palin is the only intelligent life in the universe?

"It's a real possibility. If that's the case, then we have a real responsibility to preserve intelligent life in the galaxy."

Thacker and McMaster University Prof. Doug Welch will be talking about this issue Friday night, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., at the Uncommon Grounds coffee shop on South Park Street.

Teen boy charged in drive-by shooting

JENNIFER TAPLIN
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A 15-year-old boy known to police was arrested Thursday in relation to the recent drive-by shooting in Halifax.

The victim and three of his friends were walking along Bayers Road at the intersection at Romans Avenue just before 6 p.m. on Tuesday night when a car they described as a silver Honda Civic drove past. The boys described a popping sound and the victim thought firecrackers were thrown down the back of his coat.

When they got to the Halifax Shopping Centre, he realized he was grazed by a bullet. He was taken to the hospital and released later.

Then early yesterday morning, police made an arrest.

"Parents of a youth stepped forward and the youth stepped forward as well, and we were provided with the information we needed to make an arrest

and lay a charge," said Const. Jeff Carr of the Halifax Regional Police.

He wouldn't say how the informant was related to the case.

At 3:40 a.m. Thursday, police arrived at a Lakeside residence and arrested a 15-year-old boy. He's charged with attempted murder, firearms offences and a breach of probation.

Carr said the boy was arrested without incident and they also seized a silver Toyota.

"It's very close to what was provided in the description," Carr said. "It could have easily been mistaken for a Civic."

But the investigation isn't over.

"There's information at this point that leads investigators to believe the incident may not have been random, but we still cannot say with absolute certainty. However, that should not be interpreted to imply the boys in the group are involved in the criminal element," Carr said.



A Halifax Regional Police officer diverts traffic from the scene of a drive-by shooting on Tuesday night.

metronews.ca
WHAT'S ONLINE TODAY

Video Prominent Canadians condemn Ottawa's stance on the Gaza conflict at metronews.ca/canada

Video Michael Ignatieff vows low- and middle-income tax cuts to boost the economy at metronews.ca/canada



SMU prof does CSI-style forensics

INVESTIGATIONS When a human skull was discovered beneath a Parrsboro church in November, Nova Scotia's medical examiner called upon the same expert used by the Miami-Dade Police Department.

No, it's not the fictional Horatio Caine.

Every two years, the real Miami-Dade Police call upon Saint Mary's University to send forensic anthropologist

Dr. Tanya Peckmann and her graduate students to the Florida city to assist with the excavation of suspected crime scenes. As the tapes roll nearby on another episode of the popular TV show CSI Miami, Peckmann is handling the real cases.

In November, Dr. Peckmann arrived in Parrsboro with four of her grad students to handle the excavation of a human skull found

beneath the church.

Peckmann began to realize she had an archeological investigation on her hands, not a forensic one.

"What happens," Peckmann said, "and it happens often in rural communities that were farmland — someone says, 'I want to be buried under the oak tree,' and the site goes without a tombstone."

CHRISTOPHER GOODING
/AMHERST DAILY NEWS

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Murphy tops on the tube Fall ratings for 2008 have CTV boasting that 42 per cent of viewers in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and P.E.I., or 286,000 people, watch Steve Murphy's newscast each night. **METRO HALIFAX**

local 3



Trish McLaren from Hubley fills up her car Thursday at the Esso Station at the intersection of Young and Robie. Gas prices were expected to go up nearly nine cents per litre overnight.

Fun while it lasted, gas prices on rise

JENNIFER TAPLIN
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There was frustration and some acceptance at the pumps Thursday.

The price of gas was expected to go up nearly nine cents per litre at midnight, boosting the price to about 78 cents per litre from 69 cents per litre. Some gas stations around the city were busy with motorists filling up before the price jump.

"Accepting is the best way to put it. We prefer to keep it low, but if it's going up, we hope it will go down the next day," said Joseph Briand of Halifax.

When gas spiked to \$1.40 per litre, Briand said he drove slower to save on gas.

"I drive mainly for business, so it didn't affect how I do business. I just

"I wouldn't mind if it was going up if I felt the oil companies weren't ripping us off."

Jim Guild

drove slower."

Jim Guild of Halifax said it seems the more expensive gas is, the more people economize.

"I wouldn't mind if it was going up if I felt the oil companies weren't ripping us off," Guild said. "I'm glad we have gas regulation. I think the companies would be even worse if they weren't regulated."

His mistrust extends to the gas pumps, too. He said many of them need some work in their accuracy.

"There's no certification of when this was checked

so I don't know when they checked them," he said, gesturing to the gas pump. "I think if the government wanted to regulate one thing, I think they should make sure all the pumps are working."

Trish McLaren of Hubley said price fluctuations don't change her driving habits, but it's frustrating not knowing why it's so much more expensive one day to the next.

"I can't cut back on the amount of driving I'm doing anyway. I like it when the prices are low — but even when the prices go up, it doesn't impact how much driving I do," she said.

"It's just frustrating because it jumps up that big, but do we know why? The reasons they tell us I don't believe are the actual reasons, like the hurricane or whatever."

More cash for green transportation

JENNIFER TAPLIN
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Green transportation in the HRM got some federal green yesterday.

Peter MacKay, the minister responsible for the Atlantic Gateway, announced more than \$100,000 for the two proj-

ects.

The Guaranteed Ride Home Program received \$50,000.

It's an 18-month pilot project run by HRM to provide emergency drives for people who carpool, bike, walk or use other environmentally friendly transportation.

HRM will also get another

\$55,000 to develop a dedicated municipal fund to encourage greener transportation choices.

The money comes from Transport Canada's eco-Mobility program, which is designed to develop initiatives to encourage commuters to take public transit or use other alternatives to driving.

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If you've always wanted to act, here's your chance: There's a contest to fill the role of Ms. Darbus, the eccentric yet passionate high school drama teacher, in Neptune's upcoming production of High School Musical. Women between 30 and 50 should enter. Visit www.cbc.ca/ns for details. **METRO HALIFAX**



Colin and Cathy Fox tell a crowd of about 200 people about their son Craig, who is a soldier in the Israeli Defence Force, during a rally at the Beth Israel synagogue in Halifax last night.

Pro-Israel rally decries violence

JENNIFER TAPLIN
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About 200 people took a moment to pray Thursday night for all innocent victims of the conflict in Gaza.

It was a pro-Israel rally, called Freedom from Terror, at the Beth Israel synagogue in Halifax.

"Israel and Palestinians are both the victims of Hamas," said Rabbi Ari Sherbill. "Their campaign of terror as a result has had innocent lives result in death."

"What separates us from those who celebrate death is our sorrow at all innocent victims."

There were several local speakers Thursday night before a huge screen showed a satellite feed from a rally in Toronto.

One of the local speakers, Cathy Fox, told the crowd about her son

"Israel and Palestinians are both the victims of Hamas. Their campaign of terror as a result has had innocent lives result in death."

Rabbi Ari Sherbill

Craig. He's a 24-year-old Haligonian who went to join the the Israeli Defence Force.

At 3:15 a.m. on Tuesday morning, she got a call from a hospital. Her son told her he was holding a nightlight so they could pound a hole through a wall to shoot from, when his hand was hit with a sledgehammer.

Then the snipers started firing, and a rock dislodged by a bullet struck him just under his helmet.

"He said, 'I've injured

my eye, I have scratches on the corneas and cuts.'

"He said, 'I should be better by Tuesday and I'll be going back in to join my unit.'"

Cathy told the rally that her son feels what he's doing there is very important.

"He said it's gotten so bad over the past couple weeks, the atmosphere has changed, the degree of fear has increased — but the people are behind them."

In a phone interview, Ismail Zayid, president of the Canada Palestine Association, said there would be two pro-Palestine rallies Friday at the public library on Spring Garden Road and at the Dalhousie campus.

"We believe these are outrageous war crimes be committed against innocent people, supported by governments like the United States, Canada and others," Zayid said.

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Minister to meet union to discuss funding crisis

Service Nova Scotia Minister Richard Hurlburt plans to meet with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities on Jan. 16 to try to find a solution to a funding crisis. A recent re-evaluation decimated the budgets of some areas. **METRO HALIFAX**

local 5

Climate plan delayed

Cabinet shuffle means long-awaited report postponed



RYAN TAPLIN/METRO HALIFAX

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Today was supposed to be Mark Parent's big day.

The former Environment minister had spent the last couple years working on the government's climate change plan. After many delays, it was finally completed and ready to be released today.

But on Wednesday, Premier Rodney MacDonald shuffled his cabinet. Parent was moved out of Environment to Agriculture as former Natural Resources minister David Morse took over his job. Parent is also minister of Labour.

Now the report is delayed yet again, so that Morse has time to catch up and be the go-to guy when it's released. A lot of people in Parent's position would be frustrated, but luckily he's a former pastor.

"There's a passage in the New Testament where Paul talks about others labouring and him reaping, and him labouring and others reaping," Parent said. "And so I thought, you know,

I'm happy for David."

Morse had some involvement with the plan in his previous job, but said he wants to study every aspect of it before the release. There is no new release date for the plan, which will be announced alongside the new energy strategy.

But Morse said he hopes it won't be much more than a week.

"The biggest challenge we face globally is climate change," said Morse. "You can solve terrorism, poverty and cure cancer, and it's going to be irrelevant if we've allowed the climate to get out of control."

The plan has already been approved by cabinet, and Morse said he won't be making any changes to it.

The plan was originally due more than a year ago, but saw repeated delays. Morse said it will be worth the wait.

"You've really got to make sure that you've got it right. If that means that it takes an extra year, then it's better to take the year. But make sure that it's right when you do unveil it," he said.

Tories plan to raise minimum wage

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The Tories say they will continue with their plan to boost minimum wage despite the economic downturn.

Nova Scotia last saw its minimum wage rise to \$8.10 from \$7.60 per hour on March 31. It was the first step in a three-year-plan by the province's minimum wage review committee.

That plan concludes in October 2010 with a minimum wage of \$9.65. Meanwhile, Newfoundland and Labrador just announced it would increase its minimum wage to \$10 per hour over the next 18 months. As of New Year's Day, it went up to \$8.50. New Brunswick and P.E.I. are debating raises of their own.

Labour Minister Mark Parent said some businesses have complained about raising Nova Scotia's mini-

mum rate to \$8.10 during a rough economic period.

"There have been businesses that have come and said that decision was made in light of better economic times and it's putting pressure on us to have such a high minimum

wage. I don't foresee any changes to the decision that was made," said Parent.

Parent said the demographic profile of Nova Scotia means employers have to pay more anyway. He said fewer young people and a smaller labour force puts upward pressure on wages.

"I found when we raised the minimum wage this time that many of the companies were already paying that. They had to pay that or above in order to attract workers," he said.

New Brunswick currently has the lowest minimum wage rate in the country at \$7.75 per hour. Nova Scotia's rate is the fourth lowest.



MLA Mark Parent

Lack of judges forcing long waits for trials

SYDNEY Provincial court judges in Sydney are setting trial dates in 2010, raising concerns for the president of the Nova Scotia Barristers' Society, who hopes the province will soon appoint the new judge that has been promised for the hectic court system.

Prominent criminal lawyer Joel Pink,

president of the society, said after his last trip to Sydney in November for a court appearance, he wrote to Justice Minister Cecil Clarke about how far into the future trial dates are being scheduled.

"The times that they are now setting down are outside the acceptable limits set down by the Supreme Court of Canada," he said. "I mean, they are over a year."

Lawyers seeking earlier court dates may make applications under the Canadian Charter of Rights and

Freedoms for trials within a reasonable time, he said.

"They are going to be successful, which will result in charges being thrown out of court," he said.

"Everybody is entitled to a trial within a reasonable amount of time."

There were 65 provincial court trials scheduled for 2010 on Tuesday, including some in April, in the Sydney-based court system.

The provincial government said last year it would appoint new provincial

court judges for Sydney (which has three full-time and two visiting judges), Halifax and New Glasgow, and a family court judge for Kentville. A search committee recommended a short list of names on Aug. 5. New judges have been appointed for three of the areas but not yet for Sydney.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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The military is looking for more than two million rounds of ammunition for Soviet guns, a curious purchase experts say appears destined for the weapons of Afghan soldiers under the charge of the Canadian army in Kandahar. The majority of ammo sought is for the Afghan army's main rifle, the AK47. **TORSTAR NEW SERVICES**

Canada



Métis win hunting-rights case

A man has won a five-year legal battle against the Manitoba government with a landmark court ruling on Métis hunting rights. Provincial court Judge John Coombs ruled Thursday that Will Goodon, charged with hunting without a licence, was within his rights to shoot the r-neck duck in October 2004, as the hunting area fell within traditional Métis hunting grounds.

CBC NEWS ONLINE

Blackmore claims religious persecution

Polygamist leader says charges are for political reasons

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One of the men facing polygamy charges in the British Columbia community of Bountiful said Thursday he's being persecuted for his religion.

Winston Blackmore, who allegedly has more than 20 wives, told reporters in Creston, B.C., that he was being charged for political reasons. He said the timing of the charges was intended to help the current B.C. government "grandstand" ahead of this spring's provincial election.

Polygamy is illegal in Canada, a ban that Blackmore claims violates his re-

"Polygamy is not about religion. It's about the power of men over women and children."

Nancy Mereska

ligious freedom as guaranteed by Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Nancy Mereska, co-ordinator of Stop Polygamy in Canada, said she "absolutely rejects" Blackmore's claim.

"Polygamy is not about religion," she said. "It's about the power of men over women and children." She added that Part 1 of the Charter says the rights listed are subject to the laws of Canada.

"They can have whatever religious belief they want,

but when they practise a belief that is against the law they are committing a crime."

Mereska said she believes that more charges are coming.

"I can see this going the Supreme Court of Canada in about seven years and I'm confident the Supreme Court is going to uphold our laws against polygamy."

ShareYourViews

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Oilsands companies not worried about lawsuits

ENVIRONMENT Canadian oilsands producers, under fire from environmental critics, do not fear increasing legal challenges to their operations while they try to polish their public image, executives said Thursday.

As part of a campaign to respond to Canadians' concerns about the environmental impact of multibillion-dollar oilsands developments, the industry released a poll showing half

"I wouldn't say we have any fear at all."

Bruce March

of respondents don't believe its officials' comments.

Such numbers show the need to improve communications, but recent court challenges to oil sands projects and operations by environmental groups are not cause for alarm, execu-

tives said.

"I wouldn't say we have any fear at all," Bruce March, chief executive of Imperial Oil Ltd said.

On Wednesday, the group Ecojustice and its allies took the first step to convince a judge to lay charges against Syncrude Canada Ltd for the deaths of 500 ducks that had landed on a toxic tailings pond at its northern Alberta site last spring.

REUTERS

Eight cleared in pipeline bombings

DAWSON CREEK, B.C. RCMP have cleared eight people identified as potential suspects in attacks on natural gas facilities in northern British Columbia, a spokesman said Thursday.

Police took the unusual step last month of releasing the photographs of the eight people, whose names they did not know, but who had used a Dawson Creek, B.C., post office the same day that letters believed linked to the attacks were mailed.

The letters sent to media in October warned EnCana

Attacks

- Two pipelines and a gas wellhead were damaged in the attacks in October, while the latest blast partly destroyed a metering shed at a well south of Dawson Creek, near the Alberta provincial boundary.

Corp. and other energy companies to leave the area. Three Encana-owned facilities were damaged by bombs in October and a fourth last Sunday.

"We have identified all

eight people and they are no longer part of the investigation," said Sgt. Tim Shields of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, adding that the search did produce more leads for investigators to follow.

Shields acknowledged that investigators were still running into resistance from some residents of the area.

"There is a core of people in the community who we believe have information and are not co-operating with investigators," Shields said.

REUTERS

Ottawa Striking transit workers reject offer



Ottawa residents showed their support as transit union members arrived at the Ottawa Civic Centre on Thursday to vote on the city's latest contract offer. The vote took place after Rona Ambrose, federal minister of labour, ordered the union to allow a vote. Workers rejected the offer.

TRACY TONG/METRO CANADA

owed in Frigid Nor'easter Gale Sleet Blustery Do
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Deficit to be 'substantial': Flaherty

ECONOMY Canada will run a "substantial" budget deficit in the fiscal year starting on April 1, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty said Thursday, citing planned stimulus measures to respond to the world economic downturn.

"Canada has certain needs and Canadians have certain needs in this extraordinary time of global recession. To fulfill those needs, we are going to have to run a substantial deficit, which we will do," Flaherty said.

REUTERS

News in brief

SICK KIDS Four top officials of Toronto's Sick Kids Foundation have left the charity, creating a leadership gulf the agency says it hopes to fill as soon as possible. Michael O'Mahoney, president of the foundation — the fundraising arm of the Hospital for Sick Children — left to pursue his goal of becoming a deacon in the Roman Catholic Church, board chair Patsy Anderson said yesterday.

PUNTLAND Adam Esse of Mississauga, Ont., lost his bid Thursday to become president of Puntland, an Islamic state within Somalia that has become the staging ground for pirates in the Horn of Africa.

PROTESTS Prominent Canadians called on Ottawa to demand a ceasefire in Gaza in the face of Israel's "war crimes."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Russia eyes restoration of gas supply to Europe

Russia's state-controlled gas monopoly said yesterday it would restore supplies to Europe through Ukraine, cut off after a dispute between Moscow and Kiev, as soon as international monitors are in place. The gas cutoffs have left hundreds of thousands of people in the Balkans without gas, forced factories to shut down and disrupted deliveries as far west as France and Germany. **REUTERS**

7

World



'Better sex' ads draw complaints

Britain's advertising watchdog said yesterday it would take action to remove billboard ads that ask: "Want longer lasting sex?" The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) said it would take down the ads itself after the Advanced Medical Institute, the firm behind the posters, said it would not willingly remove them. The ASA said it had received more than 400 complaints and was investigating whether the ads were offensive. **REUTERS**

Jordan The next generation



Jordanian children hold toy guns as they shout anti-Israel slogans during a protest in Amman yesterday against Israeli attacks in the Gaza Strip. Palestinians faced even grimmer conditions yesterday after a UN aid agency halted work, saying its staff were at risk from Israeli forces fighting Hamas militants, after two drivers were killed.

Obama urges stimulus

Few new budget details in economic speech

U.S. president-elect Barack Obama warned yesterday the U.S. economy could stay mired in recession for years without bold action, and he urged lawmakers to work to pass a massive stimulus plan.

Obama, who takes office Jan. 20, promised to set a new economic course and to quickly toughen the financial regulatory system.

"I don't believe it's too late to change course, but it will be if we don't take dramatic action as soon as possible," Obama said at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va. "If nothing is done, this recession

could linger for years. The unemployment rate could reach double digits."

But he gave few new details about the package of tax cuts and public-works spending



Barack Obama

he was going to get "the biggest bang for the buck."

Obama is seeking approval by mid-February of the proposed stimulus

Plan outline

- In addition to tax cuts for families and businesses, the plan would pay for construction and repair of roads and schools and provide aid to cash-strapped cities and states.

package he is crafting in close consultation with the Democratic-led Congress.

In addition, Obama urged further measures to shore up confidence in the financial system and restore smooth functioning of the frozen credit markets. **REUTERS**

Pakistan OK'd Mumbai gunman info: Ex-adviser

SHOOTING Pakistan's security agencies had authorized confirmation the surviving Mumbai gunman was Pakistani, the former national security adviser said yesterday, adding he was sacked because the prime minister had been out of the loop.

India had been saying for weeks the gunman captured in Mumbai, Mohammed Ajmal Kasab, was from Pakistan. Pakistan had said it could not find his name on a national database of citizens and it

was investigating.

Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani fired the national security adviser, Mahmud Ali Durrani, on Wednesday, shortly after he and other officials had confirmed to reporters the gunman in Indian custody was Pakistani.

Newspapers in India interpreted his dismissal as a reaction to his revelation. But Durrani said authorities had already decided to confirm the gunman was Pakistani. **REUTERS**

Afghans sign up to combat Israelis in Gaza

MIDDLE EAST More than a thousand Afghans signed up Thursday to say they wanted to fight Israel in the Gaza Strip, many of them blaming the United States which has some 30,000 troops in Afghanistan, for supporting the Jewish state.

Accusations by Taliban militants and some Muslim clerics that Israel and its main ally, the U.S., aim to destroy Islam have a strong impact on public opinion in Afghanistan, where Washington plans to almost double its troop numbers.

Scores of young men crowded into a Kabul mosque, lined with banners reading "Death to Israel" and "Death to America." to sign up to fight Israel. More than a thousand Afghans registered there, officials said. **REUTERS**

Panel backs governor's impeachment

ILLINOIS A legislative committee recommended the impeachment of Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich yesterday, citing widespread abuse of power including allegations he tried to sell the Senate seat left by president-elect Barack Obama.

If the Illinois House of Representatives votes to accept the recommendation and impeach Blagojevich, he would be tried in the state Senate and could be removed from office if convicted. The two-term Democrat has denied any wrongdoing. **REUTERS**

News in brief

INDIA A teacher who blinded a girl by inserting a pin into one of her eyes will be charged with attempted murder, officials said. Police said the teacher used a pin to prick the six-year-old girl's right eye after she failed to answer a question in class. The teacher has been on the run since Novem-

ber, but police only received a complaint Wednesday.

PAKISTAN Al Qaeda's operations chief in Pakistan and a top lieutenant are believed to be dead, a U.S. official said yesterday. The operations chief, Usama al-Kini, was thought to be behind the truck bombing of a Marriott hotel in Islama-

bad that killed 55 people in September, as well as other attacks, the official said.

NEPAL The United Nations human rights agency has urged Nepal's government to search for girls who went missing after their parents sold them into domestic service, and urged an end to the practice. **REUTERS**

Public Consultation

Condominium Act

This Act relates to the development and operation of condominiums.

We are seeking public feedback on possible changes to this Act.

A discussion paper is available for this purpose at **www.gov.ns.ca/snsmr/condoact** or by calling **902-424-5200** in Metro **1-800-670-4357** toll free

The deadline for responses is
February 13, 2009

Thank you for your participation.

Note: Construction issues are part of the Homeowner Protection Review; therefore, NOT part of this consultation.

NOVA SCOTIA

Service Nova Scotia
and Municipal Relations

Identity thieves are resorting to buying second-hand drives from eBay and recovering "deleted" files, including some information that could be confidential, with specialist data recovery software. The only solution? Smash it before you trash it. **REUTERS**

Business

EDITOR: FERMIN DESOUZA, FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

A sea change in banking habits

Rising credit losses coupled with slowing loan growth spell a challenging year for the country's big banks.

More Canadians are hunkering down and saving more money, which is sparking a swell in deposits growth at a time when demand for some consumer loans such as residential mortgages is fading.

Some banks are shifting their focus to bread-and-butter retail banking. Bank of Montreal, for example, says it has gained market share of deposits and predicts that consumers will be more inclined to save than borrow this year.

"When you get unrest in the marketplace, money goes to safe havens," said Chris Hodgson, head of do-

"When you get unrest in the marketplace, money goes to safe havens."

Chris Hodgson

mestic banking at Scotia-bank.

GICs and high-interest savings accounts are proving popular and more growth is expected as Canadians flock to the new tax-free savings accounts.

Meanwhile, banks are bracing for slower demand for residential mortgages, higher default rates on loans and growing credit card balances as consumers rely more heavily on plastic money to get through the tough times.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Business in brief

PENSIONS Employees and retirees could expect reductions in their pensions, if their companies can't survive long enough to fully fund defined-benefit plans, two actuarial firms said. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

OVERTIME Five million Britons worked a total of \$40.53 billion US in unpaid overtime last year because of a "long-hours" culture and concern that the downturn was putting their jobs at risk. **REUTERS**

Electronics Laptop light on weight and wallet



Japanese journalists look over a Sony P Series Lifestyle PC during a media preview at the International Consumer Electronics Show in the Las Vegas Convention Center in Las Vegas. The computer weighs only 1.4 pounds and is expected to be available next month with a retail price of about \$900 US. The consumer technology trade show is expected to attract 2,700 exhibitors and 130,000 attendees.

Chrysler and GM Canada receive loan deferral

AUTOS General Motors of Canada Ltd. and Chrysler Canada Inc. won't start receiving up to \$4 billion in government loans until the middle of the month after the companies requested a deferral.

The federal government confirmed that Ottawa and

Ontario agreed to the request for the two-week delay in distribution of the loans, which was previously scheduled to begin Dec. 29.

Officials for both companies and the governments would not comment on the reasons for the re-

quests for deferrals or any outstanding issues in talks.

GM was to get \$800 million on Dec. 29 in the first of three instalments and another \$2.2 billion by Feb. 27. Chrysler was to get an initial \$400 million and another \$600 million in instalments. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

Retail sales fared better than in U.S.

FIGURES While U.S. retailers reported what some analysts called the worst holiday sales in four decades, some said they fared better in Canada.

South of the border, a slew of American retailers issued profit warnings yesterday after reporting sharply lower same-store sales for December that could have repercussions for Canadian subsidiaries of chains, experts said.

An executive at RioCan Real Estate Investment Trust, a major Canadian retail landlord, said sales were down anywhere from three to 10 per cent on a same-store basis.

These numbers are considered a key indicator of retail performance because they compare sales at stores open since this time last year. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

THE DAILY BUSINESS BUZZ

Brace for extra electronics fee: Luxury items such as DVD or MP3 players will soon cost consumers more when an electronic handling fee is added to the bill of sale. On Feb. 1, the Atlantic Canada Electronic Stewardship Program will expand its ban on a greater number of regulated electronics from Nova Scotia's landfills.

Increase in work at Magna: Magna Powertrain's Precision Finished Components plant in North Sydney is continuing to crank out auto parts and no one has been laid off yet, despite an announcement last month that the plant will close in December. In fact, the normal Christmas shutdown was cancelled and while a company spokesperson said it's "business as usual" at the plant, one employee said production has actually increased since the announced closure.

Brace for extra electronics fee: At a pre-budget consultation roundtable with federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty on Jan. 9, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business will request a number of things. Among them: to avoid deficits, decrease spending, avoid expensive bailout packages, overhaul Employment Insurance; and long-term personal income tax cuts.

Get the full stories delivered to your inbox every morning by signing up for the Daily Business Buzz www.nsbj.ca

PUBLIC MEETINGS

School Review: Alderney School

The Halifax Regional School Board is currently conducting a school review of Alderney School, a grade Primary to six school in Dartmouth.

In accordance with the *Education Act and Regulations*, an *Impact Assessment Report* has been prepared looking at potential options regarding the future of the school.

A Study Committee has been formed and has responded to the *Impact Assessment Report*.

As part of the process, the school board will hold public meetings to give the public an opportunity to make representations to the Study Committee's response.

The meetings will take place at the following times:

Monday, February 2, 2009, 7 p.m.
Alderney School
2 Penhorn Drive, Dartmouth

(If necessary)

Tuesday, February 3, 2009, 7 p.m.
Alderney School
2 Penhorn Drive, Dartmouth

Members of the public interested in making a representation should contact the Halifax Regional School Board at 464-2000 ext. 2321 or e-mail corporatesecretary@hrsb.ns.ca.



Halifax Regional
School Board

A copy of the *Impact Assessment Report* and the Study Committee's response can be found on the board's website at www.hrsb.ns.ca/content/id/1030.html or by contacting the board using the information previously mentioned.

A decision on the future of Alderney School will be made by the school board no later than March 31, 2009.

The board could decide, among other things, to:

- keep the school open;
- consolidate the school, or a part of the school, with another public school; or
- permanently close the school.

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Comment & Views

Comment

Housing hidden troubles

Homebuyers should do research to avoid a fixer-upper

Marketplace



Wendy Mesley

Buying a new house is probably the biggest purchase you will ever make. It's supposed to come with peace of mind, both financially and structurally. But some Canadians who bought new homes during the housing boom are just now finding out that new doesn't always mean trouble-free. And that could be a lot of people. Even with the economic slowdown, more than 83,600 new homes will be built in Canada this year.

Joe and Joanne West of

As with most things, you have to do a lot of work to make sure that what you are getting is a quality product.

Hamilton have been in their new home for just three years. But within two weeks of moving in, part of their basement floor caved in. Within the next few months, they compiled a list of more than 100 problems, including serious leaks, an unsteady roof and shaky floors. So in addition to the hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on their new home, they had to spend thousands more to start fixing their house.

How does a new home become a fixer-upper? As with most things, you have to do

a lot of work to make sure that what you are getting is a quality product.

For the Wests, the problems started before they took possession. The City of Hamilton didn't issue a building permit, which is required by law, until five months after construction began. That means the builder started work on the house without the building plans reviewed by the city.

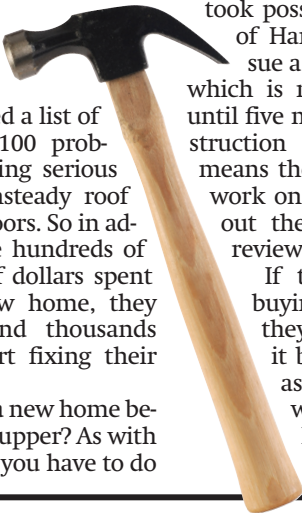
If the Wests were buying a new toaster, they could just take it back. But it's not as easy to do that with a new house. Instead, the Wests began a

fight with their builder, the City of Hamilton, and Taron (Ontario's new-home warranty program). In the end, they received a settlement from Taron, but their fight still isn't settled with the builder or the city.

If you're worried about getting sunk with a money pit of a brand new home, there are things you can do:

Get references from your builder. Before buying, make sure your real-estate lawyer checks for any liens against the house and that an occupancy permit has been issued. Check that all building permits are issued. Get an independent inspector to check your home before you take possession.

Wendy Mesley is co-host of CBC TV's Marketplace. To learn more about new home buying pitfalls, check out this season's premiere episode, *New Home Nightmares*, Friday, Jan. 9 at 8:30 p.m. or go to www.cbc.ca/marketplace.



Views

Underage wives wrong, no matter the faith



Paul Sullivan

Canada views

Sometimes, you just know when something is wrong. And Winston Blackmore, the potentate of the fundamentalist Mormon sect in Bountiful, B.C., has been wrong for a very long time.

Out there nestled in the Kootenays, he has managed to accumulate an estimated 26 wives (a number of them allegedly 16 or younger when he married them) and 108 children.

There's nothing new about the Blackmore men folk building herds of wives — they've been at it since 1946.

Yet while Winston and his forebears have been serving matrimonial Kool-Aid with a very large ladle, B.C.'s authorities have stood

by, wringing their hands, afraid that if they did anything, well, something might happen.

Their worst fear is that, even though polygamy is illegal in Canada, the law hasn't been tested in modern times, and Blackmore will successfully defend his polygamous ways under the Charter of Rights freedom of religion provisions.

Then what do they do? This situation is complicated by the fact that Canada's fastest growing immigrant minority is Muslim, and under some interpretations of Muslim law, men are allowed to have as many as four wives. At least one matrimonial enthusiast, Aly Hindy of Toronto, has "blessed" more than 30, um, extra marriages, and he didn't sound very apologetic in a recent quote: "This is our religion," he crowed, "and nobody can force us to do anything

against our religion."

Fortunately, Wally Oppal, B.C.'s attorney general, is immune to wedlock mind-lock and has had Blackmore and the rest of the Bountiful bulls in his sights since he was appointed in 2005. On Wednesday, he arrested Blackmore and James Oler, Blackmore's apparent rival "bishop" in what they call a "church."

I don't care if you believe, as the members of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and its various splinter groups do, in the doctrine of plural marriage, which states that a man having multiple wives is ordained by God and is a requirement for a man to receive the highest form of salvation.

I do care (and, yay, so does Wally Oppal), if you allegedly groom young girls by brainwashing them from birth, then parcel them out

like gold medals for good behaviour. I do care that they have absolutely no say in the matter. I do care that the Hildale, Colo., headquarters of the so-called church has the highest incidence of a genetic birth defect that causes encephalopathy, severe mental retardation, unusual facial features and epileptic seizures, according to a June 14, 2007, Reuters article.

In short, whatever you believe, it's wrong to force, through some spurious authority, your beliefs on those who are underage, innocent, weak. It may be complicated or risky to take these guys on, but there's no place on Earth for this kind of nonsense. Heaven, apparently, is well-stocked with plural wives. All you boys have to do is wait a while.

Paul Sullivan is a Vancouver-based journalist and owner of Sullivan Media Consulting.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

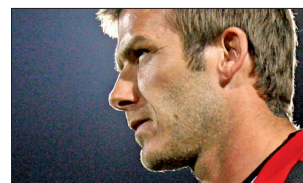
Worth mentioning

Has soccer star Beckham lost his footing in the ad world?

David Beckham's image as a global marketing icon may be showing its first cracks.

The soccer star, whose 10-year marketing relationship with PepsiCo recently ended, came to the U.S. in 2007 in a deal with Major League Soccer worth up to \$250 million US.

"Becks" was already an international star for his soccer skills, good looks and marriage to a former Spice Girl. But his U.S. tenure has been marred by injury and poor performance by his Los



GETTY IMAGES

David Beckham Angeles Galaxy team, and MLS TV ratings are stagnant.

"He is no longer a world-class athlete, and therefore has become less interesting," said Stephanus Tekle, consultant at SPORT+MARKT in Germany.

BEN KLAYMAN/REUTERS

Quote of the Day

"I was just floored ... to find out that the future commander-in-chief was actually going to be the future nerd-in-chief."

— Marvel Comics editor-in-chief Joe Quesada, who said the idea for a new Spider-Man edition, *Spidey meets the President!*, came from a statement from U.S. president-elect Barack Obama that he collected Spider-Man comics. REUTERS

Metro Online Poll Results

71% SAID YES

Should polygamy continue to be illegal in Canada?

29% SAID NO

Weigh in on today's question at metronews.ca

It's your turn to tell others what you think. E-mail your thoughts and opinions to: halifaxletters@metronews.ca

Letters must include sender's full name, address and phone number — street name and phone numbers will NOT be published. We reserve the right to edit letters.

The Canadian Soccer Association announced Thursday that Christine Sinclair, left, is the female selection for the 2008 adidas Canadian Player of the Year award. The 25-year-old played 22 games for the national team in 2008, scoring 13 times. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Sports

SPORTS@METRONEWS.CA

Tavares traded

The Ontario Hockey League's London Knights acquired Team Canada hero John Tavares from the Oshawa Generals on Thursday. It is not known when he will make his Knights debut, but if he's in the lineup Friday, he'll face his former team as London hosts the Generals. Tavares is favoured to be the first pick in the 2009 NHL draft. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Penaltyfest in Montreal

NHL RESULT

Leafs 2 Canadiens 6



Andrei Kostitsyn had a goal and two assists, as the Montreal Canadiens used a balanced scoring attack to rout the Toronto Maple Leafs, 6-2, at Bell Centre on Thursday.

Sergei Kostitsyn, Maxim Lapierre, Guillaume Latendresse and Alex Kovalev also scored for Montreal, which has won three straight and six of seven.

Patrice Brisebois tallied three assists, while Jaroslav Halak made 30 saves in the

In the box

• The Leafs and Habs combined for 130 penalty minutes in Montreal's 6-2 win Thursday — 72 for Toronto, 58 for Montreal.

win. Tomas Kaberle and Matt Stajan provided the only offence for the Maple Leafs, who have lost six of eight.

Vesa Toskala struggled, allowing five goals on 21 shots in two periods before being pulled in favor of Curtis Joseph, who allowed a goal on eight shots.

Montreal's power play struck quickly, as Sergei Kostitsyn gave the Canadiens a 1-0 just 2½ minutes into the game. Lapierre's



The Habs' Andrei Kostitsyn checks Jeff Finger on Thursday.

wrist shot found its way to the back of the net at the five-minute mark of the first, extending Montreal's lead to two.

Toronto cut its deficit in half, though, as Kaberle's

slap shot on the power play made its way through traffic, beating Halak on the lower left side of the net with 12:05 still left in the first.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

BCS Sooners, Gators for title



Brandon James of the Florida Gators runs after a catch in the BCS Championship game against Oklahoma in Miami last night. For a complete game recap, visit metronews.ca/sports.

Ravens, Eagles hoping that history repeats itself

NFL - RAVENS @ TITANS

Saturday, 5:30 p.m.

With an AFC Divisional Playoff game at Tennessee on tap for this Saturday, giddy Baltimore Ravens fans are all too aware of the parallels.

It was the 2000 postseason when the Ravens, a wild-card upstart, went into Nashville to play the top-seeded Titans in the AFC divisional round. The new cast members in the revival of that memorable playoff game are John Harbaugh, Joe Flacco, and the duo of Chris Johnson and LenDale White.

Otherwise, the scenario is almost identical to the one that played out eight long years ago — complete with Ray Lewis and the still-dominant Ravens defence — with the result ranking as the only element of the story left in doubt.

CARDINALS @ PANTHERS/ SATURDAY, 9:15 P.M.

One week after earning their first postseason victory in a decade, the Arizona Cardinals will attempt to clear another major hurdle when they visit Charlotte Saturday's NFC divisional playoff clash with the Carolina Pan-

thers. Since the 2003 season, Arizona has gone just 2-19 when playing in the Eastern time zone.

EAGLES @ N.Y. GIANTS/ SUNDAY, 2 P.M.

Both the New York Giants and Philadelphia Eagles will be hoping history repeats itself when the division rivals square off this Sunday in an NFC divisional playoff from the Meadowlands. Philadelphia is seeking a duplication of a more recent event. Just over a month ago, the Eagles went into the Meadowlands in must-win mode and delivered one of their most impressive performances of the season in a 20-14 ousting of the reigning world champions.

CHARGERS @ STEELERS/SUNDAY, 5 P.M.

The San Diego Chargers have surged to five straight wins as they enter their AFC divisional playoff matchup at Pittsburgh on Sunday, but they'll make their trip limping. The team's top two offensive weapons — LaDainian Tomlinson and Antonio Gates — are contending with injuries that could severely hamper the Chargers attack as it enters what figures to be a hard-hitting contest.

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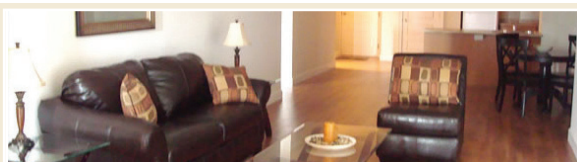
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Tip of the Day: If you're proactive, you don't have to wait for circumstances or other people to create perspective expanding experiences. You can consciously create your own. -- Stephen Covey

Orlando Magic centre Dwight Howard continues to lead all players in the latest fan balloting results for the 2009 NBA all-star game. Howard, last year's slam dunk champion, has received 2,102,368 votes and has a slight lead over Cleveland's LeBron James. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Look who's 40 and fast

How a Cole Harbour mother ran into the history books

MATTHEW WUEST
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As a single mother of three, it goes without saying that Denise Robson does plenty of running around.

But Robson is not just a single mother of three; she's also the fastest 40-and-older marathoner in Canadian history. And for her, running around involves a lot more than the traditional duties of parenthood.

The 40-year-old fits in training whenever she can: shorter runs on her lunch breaks; longer 12-kilometre runs from her office near the Armdale Rotary to her home in Cole Harbour after she's done work.

"I shake my head all the time," Robson groans, at how she manages training with girls aged eight, 10 and 12.

"I have to balance things because it's important my running time isn't taking away from my time with my kids."

Robson was a cross-country runner during her university days at Dalhousie, but quit "cold turkey" 19 years ago.

It wasn't until five years ago that she took it back up.

She had no grand visions of running a 42.2-kilometre marathon. She was going through a separation and just wanted to relieve some stress.

"A co-worker asked me to join them for a lunch-time run," she recalls.

"I thought, 'Hmm, why not? Some time away from my desk, some fresh air? It would do me good.'"

Five months later, Robson entered the Prince Ed-



Denise Robson goes for a run along the Northwest Arm on Wednesday. Robson, who is from Cole Harbour, recently broke the national women's marathon record in the 40-and-older category.

"I'm living a dream at 40 that I should have been living at 20 ... so now I'm going to run with it as far as I can, no pun intended."

Denise Robson

ward Island Marathon "just to say I'd done it."

"It was totally as a lark," she says.

It turned out to be a lot more than that. She was the fastest woman in the P.E.I. Marathon with a time of three hours, 13 minutes, and qualified for the Boston Marathon — something that usually takes years of training — by more than 30 minutes.

"Everyone was like, 'OK, wait a minute, you've got something here, Denise,'" she says.

"It's been an addiction ever since."

By the time she ran Boston less than a year later, she was 10 minutes faster than in her P.E.I. debut.

Her times improved continuously, and last month, she smashed the

country's 17-year-old masters record (and her personal best) by more than three minutes, running the California International Marathon in Sacramento in 2:41:12.

To put that time in perspective, only one man, David MacLennan, has ever recorded a time that fast in Halifax's Blue Nose International Marathon.

Robson was taken aback when she was informed a week after the marathon that she had made history.

"I was like, 'You've got the wrong person here. Are you kidding me, 2:41 is the record? Great, but

I'm gonna be faster next year," says Robson.

Her goal is to crack the two-hour, 40-minute barrier this year, and says the key to her success might be the 14-year break she took from running.

Many elite marathoners her age have run more miles and suffered more wear and tear.

Now, she wants to make up for lost time.

"I'm living a dream at 40 that I should have been living at 20," she says.

"I missed that opportunity at 20, so now I'm going to run with it as far as I can, no pun intended."

Eastern all-star roster filled out

NHL The NHL's leading goal scorers, Washington's Alex Ovechkin, Buffalo's Thomas Vanek and Philadelphia's Jeff Carter, headed a list of 15 players named as reserves to the Eastern Conference all-star team for the game to be played on Jan. 25 in Montreal. Ovechkin, Vanek and Carter were all tied for the league-lead in goals with 27 entering Thursday's action. They will be joined up front by Tampa Bay's Vincent Lecavalier, Carolina's Eric Staal (third appearance), Boston's Marc Savard, New Jersey's Zach Parise, Ottawa's Dany Heatley and Atlanta's Ilya Kovalchuk. As voted by fans, Pittsburgh's Sidney Crosby of Cole Harbour, his teammate Evgeni Malkin, and Montreal's Alex Kovalev will be the three starting forwards.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sports in brief

NHL The Pittsburgh Penguins and centre Jordan Staal have agreed to terms on a new four-year contract. Financial terms were not disclosed, although Staal will play the remainder of this season under his entry-level deal. The new pact will start with the 2009-10 season and run through 2012-13. The 20-year-old has 11 goals and 10 assists for 21 points in 41 games this season. He has netted 91 points in 204 NHL games over three seasons.

MLB The Boston Red Sox agreed to terms with both pitcher John Smoltz and outfielder Rocco Baldelli on Thursday. Smoltz had played his entire 21-year career in Atlanta.

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Pedroia a cover boy

Sony announced Thursday that AL MVP Dustin Pedroia, right, of the Boston Red Sox will be the cover athlete for MLB 09 The Show for PlayStation and PSP. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**



sports **13**

Mooseheads' rebuilding project underway

MATTHEW WUEST
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The Halifax Mooseheads have emerged from the holidays in a slightly better position for the future.

General manager Marcel Patenaude made a couple of minor moves Thursday as the final trade period of the QMJHL season came to a close, and emerges with a younger team for the second half and more draft picks to build with.

The Mooseheads picked up 17-year-old forward Andrew Smith in a trade with the Chicoutimi Saguenéens and re-assigned second-year blue-liner Richard Greer to a U.S. team.

Most of the bigger moves had already been completed, with the trade of star forward Logan MacMillan and the acquisitions of forwards Jan Stransky and Guillaume

Pelletier and defencemen Pascal Amyot and George Dunn.

"Our goal was to solidify our depth, pick-wise and player-wise," Patenaude said. "We've added Pelletier, Stransky, Amyot, Smith and Dunn to our roster — five (younger) players, and we've added a lot of picks, so we're happy."

It hasn't been decided yet whether the 6-foot-5, 210-pound Smith will play for Halifax this season, as it depends on the health of Pelletier (knee) and Justin Pender (hip).

But Patenaude called him a "big boy" and a "good skater" who had been "on our radar" for a while.

Greer, 17, was re-assigned to the New England Huskies of the Eastern Junior Hockey League.

There wasn't enough roster space to keep him, but he remains in the team's plans.

Patenaude had already cut 19-year-old forwards

Chad Earle and Matt Snow to give younger players more ice time.

Patenaude said he listened to offers for veterans such as Pender, Eric Louis-Seize, Ben MacAskill and Linden Bahm, but decided it wasn't worthwhile to move any of them.

"If we could have made more trades, we would have made more trades," he said.

"But the market wasn't there for some of our players. We're happy they're still with us and now we're focused on trying to make the playoffs."

The Herd plays on the road Friday at 8:30 p.m. against Baie-Comeau and Sunday at 5 p.m. against Chicoutimi.

In other trade news, Halifax's Bradley MacDonald was moved along with a second-round pick from Gatineau to Victoriaville for John Esposito and Dave Nolin. Glace Bay's Jarrad Struthers was moved from the Rouyn-Noranda Huskies to the P.E.I. Rocket for second- and third-round picks.



Young defenceman Richard Greer was reassigned.

Wheeling, dealing Mooseheads' recent moves

INCOMING

- F Jan Stransky (18)
- D Pascal Amyot (18)
- D George Dunn (18)
- F Guillaume Pelletier (17)
- F Andrew Smith (17)
- Rimouski Round 4 (2009 draft)
- Rimouski Round 2 (2010 draft)
- Rimouski Round 2 (2011 draft)
- Rimouski Round 3 (2011 draft)
- Saint John Round 1 (2009 European draft)

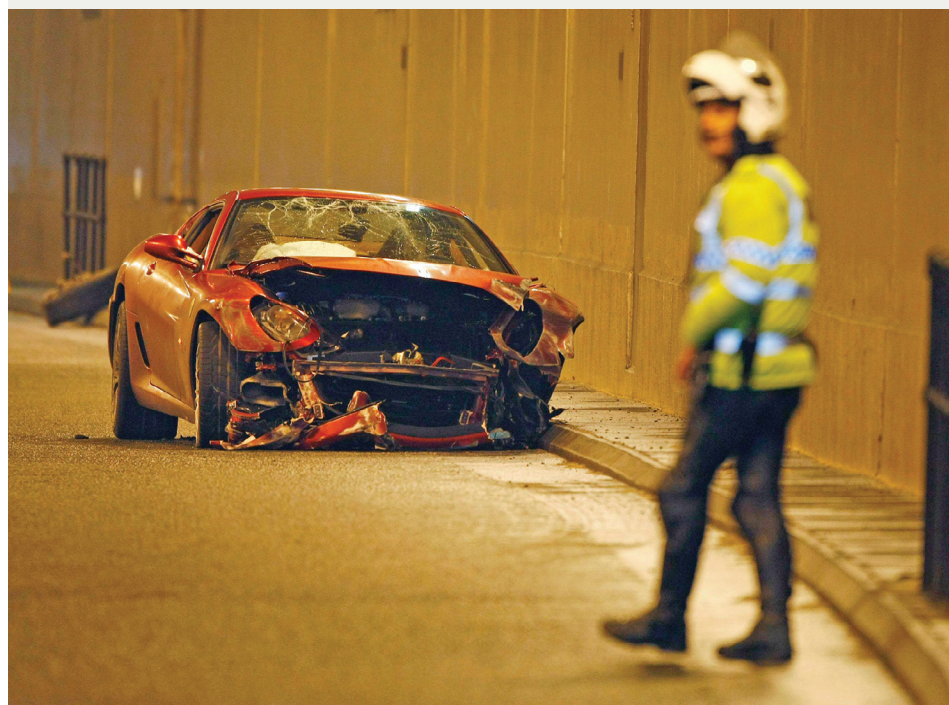
OUTGOING

- Logan MacMillan (19)
- F Chad Earle (19)
- F Matt Snow (19)
- D Richard Greer (17)
- Halifax Round 1 (2009 European draft)
- Halifax Round 8 (2009 draft)
- Halifax Round 4 (2010 draft)
- Chicoutimi Round 5 (2010 draft)



Visit Matthew Wuest's Q Files blog at metronews.ca/qfiles.

Soccer Ronaldo escapes unhurt



A police officer stands near the Ferrari of Manchester United star Cristiano Ronaldo after it crashed in a tunnel near Manchester Airport in England on Thursday. Ronaldo was not injured.

SCOREBOARD

QMJHL

ATLANTIC DIVISION				
	W	L	OT	P
Moncton	31	4	5	67
Cape Breton	29	12	2	60
Saint John	22	18	4	48
Bathurst	16	19	8	40
P.E.I.	16	21	8	40
HALIFAX	11	26	4	26
CENTRAL DIVISION				
	W	L	OT	P
Drummondville	33	6	3	69
Shawinigan	33	9	1	67
Victoriaville	23	20	1	47
Lewiston	14	29	0	28
EAST DIVISION				
	W	L	OT	P
Quebec	32	8	2	66
Rimouski	22	19	1	45
Chicoutimi	16	21	4	36

Baie-Comeau 12 23 6 30

WEST DIVISION				
	W	L	OT	P
Rouyn-Noranda	21	16	5	47
Montreal	21	17	2	44
Gatineau	19	19	4	42
Val-d'Or	9	27	6	24
FRIDAY'S GAMES				
HALIFAX at Baie-Comeau				
Cape Breton at Acadie-Bathurst				
Gatineau at Moncton				
Rouyn-Noranda at Quebec				
Victoriaville at Drummondville				
Lewiston at Shawinigan				
Rimouski at Val-d'Or				
SATURDAY'S GAMES				
Shawinigan at Chicoutimi				
Lewiston at Montreal				
Cape Breton at Acadie-Bathurst				
Moncton at P.E.I.				

Rouyn-Noranda at Quebec

SATURDAY'S GAME				
Quebec at HALIFAX				
Rimouski at Val-d'Or				
Montreal at HALIFAX				
SUNDAY'S GAMES				
HALIFAX at Chicoutimi				
Victoriaville at Baie-Comeau				
Cape Breton at Moncton				
Acadie-Bathurst at P.E.I.				
Lewiston at Shawinigan				
Gatineau at Saint John				
Rouyn-Noranda at Montreal				
PBL				
ATLANTIC DIVISION				
	W	L	PCT	
HALIFAX	2	0	1.000	
Montreal	1	1	.500	
Vermont	0	0	.000	
Quebec	0	1	.000	
Manchester	0	1	.000	

FRIDAY'S GAME

SATURDAY'S GAME				
Quebec at HALIFAX				
Rimouski at Val-d'Or				
Montreal at HALIFAX				
THURSDAY'S RESULTS				
Boston 6 Ottawa 4				
Montreal 6 Toronto 2				
Atlanta 4 New Jersey 0				
Florida 4 Carolina 2				
Philadelphia 3 Minnesota 1				
Detroit 6 Dallas 1				
Pittsburgh at Nashville				
Chicago at Colorado				
N.Y. Islanders at Calgary				
Tampa Bay at Phoenix				
Anaheim at Los Angeles				

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Rainmen Season Preview

metro

metronews.ca

Weekend, January 9-11, 2009

14sports

The Halifax Rainmen have 12 players under contract, but haven't hidden the fact they'd like to add another big man. Seven-footer Tyronne McNeal is their only true centre, and management will monitor the situation as the season progresses. **METRO HALIFAX**

Meet your 2009 Halifax Rainmen

Players

1 Jimmy Twyman

POSITION: Point guard.
HEIGHT: 6-0.
AGE: 28.
HOMETOWN: Detroit.
PAST TEAMS: Detroit Mercy (NCAA DI).
KEY FACT: Spent three years with the Harlem Globetrotters.
SCOUTING: "He's a hard-nosed defensive point guard who can handle the ball extremely well." — Rainmen owner Andre Levingston.



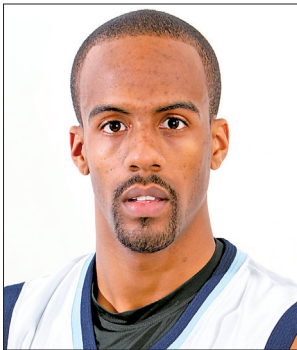
2 Kevin Hammack

POSITION: Point guard.
HEIGHT: 6-1.
AGE: 24.
HOMETOWN: Baltimore.
PAST TEAMS: The Citadel (NCAA DI).
KEY FACT: Solid numbers as junior and senior at The Citadel (12 ppg, 3 apg).
SCOUTING: "He's a pass-first guy. When I saw him play for the first time, he had me out of my seat." — Levingston.



3 Zach Ramey

POSITION: Guard.
HEIGHT: 6-3.
AGE: 27.
HOMETOWN: Flossmoor, Ill.
PAST TEAMS: Benedictine (NCAA DIII).
KEY FACT: Torched Rainmen in pre-season as tryout with Chicago Throwbacks.
SCOUTING: "He's an explosive guy who can shoot the NBA three." — Levingston.



6 Brian Silverhorn

POSITION: Guard/Forward.
HEIGHT: 6-6.
AGE: 24.
HOMETOWN: Shelbyville, Ky.
PAST TEAMS: Georgetown (NAIA DI); Halifax (ABA).
KEY FACT: NAIA DI All-American (2006, 2007); ABA all-star alternate (2008).
SCOUTING: "He's by far a better player than last year. He's hitting shots with guys in his face." — head coach Rick Lewis.



7 Glen Dandridge

POSITION: Guard/Forward.
HEIGHT: 6-6.
AGE: 23.
HOMETOWN: Goochland, Va.
PAST TEAMS: Missouri (NCAA DI); Lambuth (NAIA DI).
KEY FACT: NAIA DI all-star (2008).
SCOUTING: "Glen has unlimited range. He's a guy who can flat-out shoot." — Levingston.



13 SirValiant Brown

POSITION: Guard.
HEIGHT: 6-2.
AGE: 26.
HOMETOWN: Washington.
PAST TEAMS: George Washington (NCAA DI).
KEY FACT: Second in NCAA DI scoring as freshman in 1999-00 (24.6 ppg).
SCOUTING: "There ain't nothin' he can't do. He's an assassin at the guard position." — Levingston.



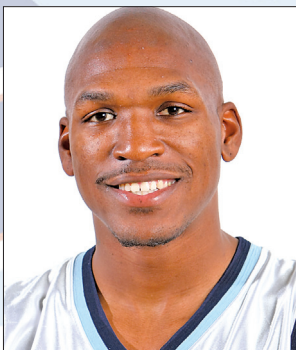
17 Cordell Jeanty

POSITION: Forward.
HEIGHT: 6-5.
AGE: 29.
HOMETOWN: Toronto.
PAST TEAMS: John A. Logan (NJCAA); Quebec City (ABA); Montreal (ABA).
KEY FACT: ABA all-star (2007).
SCOUTING: "He's a good rebounder, he creates his own shot and he can contribute every night." — Levingston.



20 Eric Crookshank

POSITION: Power Forward.
HEIGHT: 6-8.
AGE: 30.
HOMETOWN: Vallejo, Calif.
PAST TEAMS: Dominguez Hills (NCAA DII); Halifax (ABA).
KEY FACT: ABA all-star with Rainmen last season, averaging a double-double.
SCOUTING: "He's one of the best players in the league. He gives us a chance to win every night." — Levingston.



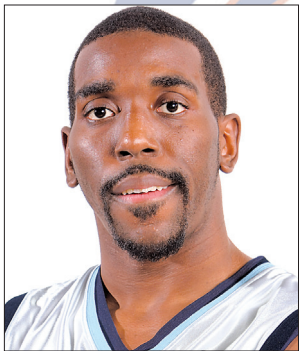
33 Rob Sanders

POSITION: Power Forward.
HEIGHT: 6-8.
AGE: 25.
HOMETOWN: New London, Conn.
PAST TEAMS: Providence (NCAA DI); Cape Cod (ABA); Manchester (ABA).
KEY FACT: ABA all-star (2007).
SCOUTING: "He gave us a pounding last year (with Manchester). He reminds me of Robert Horry." — Levingston.



34 David Bailey

POSITION: Forward.
HEIGHT: 6-8.
AGE: 25.
HOMETOWN: St. Louis.
PAST TEAMS: Maryland (ABA, PBL).
KEY FACT: Top 10 rebounder in PBL last season.
SCOUTING: "He is tough inside, outside. He breaks his man down, gets to the basket, hustles on boards." — Lewis.



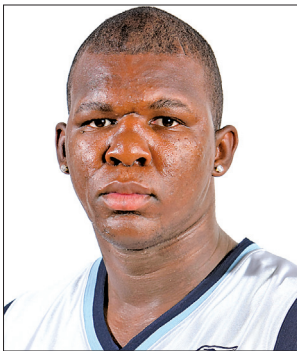
42 Rodney Mayes

POSITION: Guard.
HEIGHT: 6-6.
AGE: 25.
HOMETOWN: Marietta, Ga.
PAST TEAMS: West Virginia Tech (NCAA DII); Decatur (WBA).
KEY FACT: Averaged 20 ppg at DII level; Won WBA title in 2008.
SCOUTING: "He can probably get his shoulders up around the rim." — Levingston.



52 Tyronne McNeal

POSITION: Centre.
HEIGHT: 7-0.
AGE: 21.
HOMETOWN: Clover, S.C.
PAST TEAMS: Miami Dade (NJCAA); Georgia (ABA).
KEY FACT: Highly touted DI recruit who didn't meet NCAA academic standards.
SCOUTING: "We want him to give us some rebounds, block shots and play defence." — Levingston.



ABBREVIATIONS: • ABA — American Basketball Association; NAIA — National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics; NJCAA — National Junior College Athletic Association; NCAA — National College Athletic Association; PBL — Premier Basketball League; WBA — World Basketball Association; DI — Division 1; DII — Division 2; DIII — Division 3.

Staff

Andre Levingston

ROLE: Owner/president.
HOMETOWN: Detroit.
SEASON: Second.



Rick Lewis

ROLE: Head coach/General manager.
HOMETOWN: East St. Louis, Ill.
SEASON: Second.



Shannon Hansen

ROLE: Assistant coach.
HOMETOWN: Albany, N.Y.
SEASON: Second.



Rainmen home game schedule

All games play at the Halifax Metro Centre

Friday, Jan. 9	Quebec Kebs	7 p.m.
Sunday, Jan 11.	Montreal Sasquat'ch	2 p.m.
Saturday, Jan .25	Buffalo Stampede	4 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 29	Manchester Millrats	7 p.m.
Sunday, Feb. 8	Vermont Frost Heaves	4 p.m.
Friday, Feb. 13	Detroit Panthers	7 p.m.
Saturday, Feb. 15	Quebec Kebs	2 p.m.
Friday, Feb. 20	Vermont Frost Heaves	7 p.m.
Sunday, March 22	Manchester Millrats	2 p.m.
Saturday, March 28	Montreal Sasquatch	7 p.m.

Weekend, January 9-11, 2009

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Rainmen games to be available live online

The Halifax Rainmen announced Thursday that all of their home games this season will be webcast live online at haligonias.ca. Viewers can chat with other fans while they watch, and webcasts will be archived for fans who miss games. **METRO HALIFAX**

sports **15**

Meet your 2009 Halifax Rainmen

Levingston rebuilds Rainmen

Owner excited about the extreme makeover the roster has undergone

MATTHEW WUEST
matthew.wuest@metronews.ca

It's been more than 300 days in the making, and Andre Levingston is dying to show you what he's got.

"Man, I'm not gonna sleep at all tonight," the Halifax Rainmen owner said on Thursday, the eve of his team's home debut in the Premier Basketball League. "I'm too excited."

Levingston has spent the past nine months overhauling the Rainmen, working feverishly to upgrade his roster and provide a more professional product for fans.

His team last hit the court at the Metro Centre on March 15 as a member of the American Basketball Association. But Levingston was unhappy with the direction of the ABA and went looking for a new home. He found one in the PBL.

The Rainmen are hoping to make a splash on Friday at 7 p.m. at the Metro Centre against the Quebec Kebs and on Sunday at 2 p.m. against the Montreal Sasquatch.

Levingston, whose enthusiasm is infectious, can't stop talking about the level of basketball talent he's assembled, particularly compared to what he had last year.

"Our second unit now could beat our starting unit last year," he said. "Our second unit is more talented."

Here's a Coles Notes version of the Rainmen's off-

Crookshank makes a bold prediction

On the eve of the Halifax Rainmen's home debut at the Metro Centre, Eric Crookshank had a prediction.

"Put it this way: When you wake up Monday morning, we'll be 4-0," the 6-foot-8 Rainmen forward said.

The Rainmen make their home debut in the Premier Basketball League against the Quebec Kebs on Friday at 7 p.m. and face the Montreal Sasquatch on Sunday at 2 p.m.

They already beat both teams on the road last weekend, albeit by narrow two-point margins. But they did it without Crookshank and Rob Sanders, two of the team's best players.

season moves. Levingston brought back last year's two best players, Eric Crookshank and Brian Silverhorn. Then he signed ABA all-stars Rob Sanders and Cordell Jeanty, and picked up NCAA Division I standouts Sir-Valliant Brown and Kevin Hammack. He also brought in NAIA all-American Glen Dandridge.

There's a higher level of proven talent this time around.

"Last year, we didn't have an Eric Crookshank sitting on the bench," Crookshank said. "This year, if I leave, if Brian leaves, you have Rob Sanders or Glen Dandridge coming in. If somebody leaves, somebody else picks up the slack."

But what the Rainmen are most excited about is the PBL, which has already

"Imagine us on the court, together, this weekend?" Crookshank said. "It's going to be unbelievable."

Levingston's statement to Metro Halifax earlier this week that season-ticket sales are at the 2,000 mark was incorrect, Rainmen public relations director Nancy Sheppard said yesterday. She said the total is slightly more than 1,000.

Eleven members of the Rainmen are living together in a house in Dartmouth. The team has hired a chef.

"She takes care of us pretty good," said forward Brian Silverhorn. "She's pretty busy. It's hard to feed (11) guys."

shown signs of being a more organized league than the ABA. An obvious example is its website, which features up-to-date standings, scores and player statistics.

Other teams, such as Quebec and Montreal, also feature upgraded rosters, and the Rainmen don't expect to see six-man teams, player-coaches or last-minute no-shows.

"The commitment and professionalism you see in this league is far greater than we experienced in the ABA," said Rainmen head coach and general manager Rick Lewis.

So how good are the 2009 Halifax Rainmen?

"Championship," Crookshank said simply. "We want a parade. Fans should be excited at the product we've put together."

Ramey likes hitting the long bombs

MATTHEW WUEST
matthew.wuest@metronews.ca

PBL Zach Ramey is the kind of guy who appears to take the phrase "beyond the arc" a little bit too literally.

Case in point: Dec. 29, The Tower.

Ramey, who was trying out for the Chicago Throwbacks at the Halifax Rainmen's Holiday Classic, stepped back and drained a couple of deep three-pointers that could just as well have been launched from Point Pleasant Park.

The 6-foot-3 guard went 6-for-13 from three-point territory and was signed by the Rainmen days later.

"I was out by the volleyball line, three steps inside half-court," he chuckled. "They was playin' a zone, givin' it to me. Actually, the further away I am, the more accurate I am."

"That's something I've been doing since I was young. I've always been able to shoot the ball well."

Ramey gives the Rainmen another long-bomber to join Brian Silverhorn and Glen Dandridge. It's the type of personnel that should keep opposing defences honest.

The Flossmoor, Ill., native makes his Rainmen debut this weekend and is eager to help out however he can.

"I'm versatile, I can defend, pass, handle it, shoot it ... whatever they ask me to do, I'll do it," he said.



Brian Silverhorn is one of only three players returning from last season's Rainmen roster. Owner Andre Levingston spent nine months upgrading the team's talent level.

Rainmen taking aim on defensive side of the ball



Halifax Rainmen star Eric Crookshank admits that last season he and most of the team did not focus much on defence. Crookshank is aiming to remedy that problem this season.

MATTHEW WUEST
matthew.wuest@metronews.ca

PBL During the pre-season, Eric Crookshank got lazy and let his man get to the hoop for an easy basket.

It was a scene that was all too familiar for the Halifax Rainmen last season, when making the highlight reel on offence was the priority and defence was an afterthought.

But Crookshank didn't get away with it. Teammate Rob Sanders, a newcomer, was in his face immediately.

"He's like, 'Crookshank! What are you doing? That's your man! That's you!'" said Crookshank, the star of last year's team. "He holds you accountable. When you're

"You're not going to see a team come in and score 140 points this year, that's for sure."

Halifax Rainmen owner Andre Levingston

accountable for your mistakes, it makes the whole team better."

Defensive accountability is critical for the Rainmen. Nobody questions their athleticism and offensive ability, which oozes past the starting five and onto the bench.

But can the Rainmen shut opposing teams down? Last season, they allowed 120 or more points 11 times and went 12-20. The American Basketball Association's quirky rules had something to do with that, but so did a lax attitude.

"Defence wasn't on any-

one's mind, not even myself," Crookshank admitted. "Maybe Kadiri Richard, but I was like, 'I wanna score.' This year, I'm gonna take more pride in defence."

Owner Andre Levingston — who admits he gets as big a thrill watching Bruce Bowen as he does out of Kobe Bryant — said he built the team with players who can defend. Among the standouts are guards Jimmy Twyman and Zach Ramey and forwards David Bailey and Cordell Jeanty.

"You're not going to see a team come in and score 140 points this year, that's for

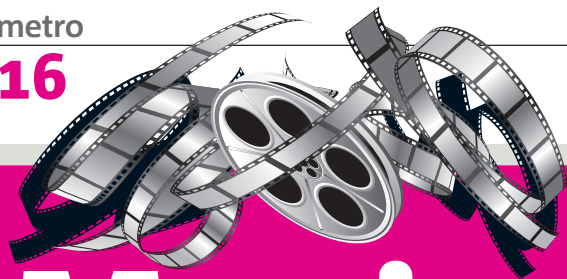
sure," Levingston said. "If that happens, I'm going to have a big problem with that."

The Rainmen have a deep bench and intend to use it, and fresh legs usually mean a more tenacious defence.

"We're gonna burn the candle at both ends," Levingston said. "Don't go in there and save nothin'."

It's all talk for now. The Rainmen weren't happy with their defensive play in a pair of road wins last weekend and are looking to atone at the Metro Centre this weekend.

"We speak on that every day," Twyman said. "But we can't just speak on it. We have to do it in games. If we do, I think we can blow this league out of the water."



Movies & Entertainment

EDITOR: DEAN LISK, DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

Movies

Battle of the brides

Pg 17



Kate Hudson and Anne Hathaway actually made a few funnies in the film *Bride Wars*. Although the storyline is pretty predictable, the cynical, cutthroat humour comes with a good dollop of wit that offers a refreshing surprise.

movies

Pg 18



Kevin James puts heart, soul and big butt into *Mall Cop*.

music

Pg 21



The upcoming new iTunes poses many questions.

television

Pg 23



Jan. 20 the D-Day for court battle over *Watchmen*?

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Also opening

Also hitting theatres on Friday is the horror film *The Unborn*. Visit metronews.ca/movies for screen times and images. A review of the movie will also be online on Sunday, and in the Monday edition of Metro. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Movies

●●●●● A CLASSIC; ●●●● EXCELLENT; ●●● GOOD; ●● FAIR; ● POOR

Married to predictability

Bride Wars

Director: Gary Winick
Stars: Kate Hudson, Anne Hathaway
Classification: PG
Rating: ●●

ROBYN YOUNG
 for Metro Canada

Kate Hudson and Anne Hathaway actually made a few funnies in the film *Bride Wars*.

The generically-titled flick about two BFFs turned frenemies in the preamble to their coinciding nuptials is just in time for one of the most popular wedding-movie months of the year. And although the storyline is gag-me-with-a-spoon predictable, the cynical, cut-throat humour comes with a good dollop of wit that offers a refreshing surprise.

Emma (Hathaway) and Liv (Hudson) have been best friends since grade school and both have dreamed of June weddings at the Plaza Hotel in New York City since catching a



Kate Hudson and Anne Hathaway transform from best friends to bridezillas when their weddings are booked on the same day.

peek of one while attending tea service with their mothers as youngsters.

The live-in boyfriends of each (played by Chris Pratt and Steve Howey) end up proposing around the same time, a scheduling mix-up with fictionally infamous wedding planner Marion St. Claire (Candice Bergen) follows, and — voila! — a nightmare is born.

The bosom buddies' weddings are booked on the same day, at the same time, in adjacent rooms and neither bride will re-

linquish her date or location. Resentment builds until it explodes into an all-out war on the day of their shared wedding shower.

"Your wedding better watch it!" shouts Hudson. "Your wedding better sleep with one eye open."

Since it's January and most of us have spent the last two months being overly nice to everyone in our paths, it comes as a bit of a treat to indulge in the sabotage-fest that ensues. It's tiring being nice all the

On the web

• To see a *Bride Wars* trailer, and for more pictures from the movies, visit metronews.ca/movies

time, as Hathaway's character Emma discovers part way through the film.

Greg DePaul and Casey Wilson probably could have written the screenplay in their sleep, but much of the dialogue is intelligent and Kristen Johnston (Third Rock from the Sun) puts on a decent supporting actress performance as Emma's unstable colleague-turned-maid-of-honour-by-default.

The main disappointment is director Gary Winick's decision to go with the melodramatic ending that tries to suck a few tears out of the audience. It ends up overplayed with a vomit-inducing result.

Otherwise, it'll be a decent rental for a Friday night in February.

Character fun to watch, but morality feels heavy

Gran Torino

Director: Clint Eastwood
Stars: Clint Eastwood
Classification: 14A
Rating: ●●½

STEVE GOW
 for Metro Canada

REVIEW Clint Eastwood thinks America's gone soft and he wants you to know it. First, the 78-year-old acting legend told *Esquire* Magazine that people were "tougher" when he was a kid and that much of his "childhood was spent punching the bullies out."

Now, with his latest drama *Gran Torino*, Eastwood puts his words into deeds playing bigoted veteran Walt Kowalski, a character that perhaps, like Clint himself, would rather put up than shut up.

Kowalski just wants to be left alone but as he sits on his porch sipping beer, lamenting the disregard of youth and the growing ethnicity of his neighbourhood, he reluctantly finds

himself developing a chummy relationship with his Hmong neighbours after he scares off pestering gang-bangers with a shotgun grumbling, "Get off my lawn."

If that slice of dialogue sounds like it was uttered by Eastwood's own *Dirty Harry*, it's certainly not by mistake. In fact, *Gran Torino* is an obvious tribute to the toughness of Eastwood's career. Kowalski isn't so much a character as he is the symbol of an era and this film, a moral lesson of changing times. Perhaps because of this, *Gran Torino*'s set-up does feel somewhat mawkish, even satirical at times.

While Eastwood is agonizingly fun to watch — think Archie Bunker with a trigger finger — *Torino*'s morality feels heavy-handed and tone uneven. Sure, it plays out like a eulogy to a tremendous career but while Eastwood's surely worth celebrating, I'm not convinced his *Gran Torino* is.

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BEST ACTOR (Drama) Brad Pitt
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NEW YORK POST
 "★★★★★
 A CLASSIC FOR THE AGES. Brad Pitt gives a deeply soulful and affecting performance. Cate Blanchett is luminous."
 — Lou Lumenick

BRAD PITT CATE BLANCHETT

The Curious Case Of
BENJAMIN BUTTON

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Movies

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Northern frights revisited

CHRIS ALEXANDER
for Metro Canada



Next week, as horror movie fans across the globe prepare to get a torrent of blood, pick axes and various viscera splattered onto their laps in Patrick Lussier's 3-D remake of My Bloody Valentine, it's a good time to reflect on the fact that director George Mihalka's original 1981 mad miner slasher epic was a prime piece of Canadian shock.

The original — shot in Sydney Mines, N.S. — was one of many northern frights whose international popularity helped shape one of the most fascinating periods in our film history. Yep, Canada was once a major hub for horror.

The first kick at the creepy Can-con can came with 1961's *The Mask*, a lowbrow 3-D picture that opened the gates for a glorious wave of eerie exploitation filmmaking.

Movie feature

Later, a couple of enterprising Montreal-based cinema-slingers, John Dunning and Andre Link, formed Cinepix, a distribution house that released *Kung Fu* (they were the first outfit to distribute Bruce Lee films in North America), horror and sex comedies and would make the most profound impact, discovering both Ivan Reitman (who unleashed the cult Eugene Levy/Andrea Martin gore classic *Cannibal Girls* in 1973) and perhaps most importantly, David Cronenberg.

It was Dunning and Link — Canada's equivalent to American International Pictures — who funded early icky Cronenberg efforts, like 1975's *Shivers* and the following year's *Rabid*; tirelessly defending his controversial work and helping to put the young auteur on the map.



Jensen Ackles stars as Tom Hanniger in *My Bloody Valentine 3-D*.

Cinepix would eventually spit out scads of unsavory fare like the legendary *Ilsa She Wolf of the SS* (it's rumoured that Reitman himself wrote that gruesome film under a pseudonym) and would capitalize on the stalk and slash trend

sparked by both *Halloween* and the far bloodier *Friday* the 13th with J. Lee Thompson's shish kebob abusing *Happy Birthday To Me* and, of course, *My Bloody Valentine*.

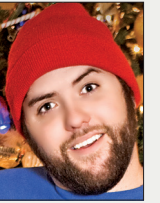
Though Dunning and Link weren't the only ones mak-

ing waves in the realms of the weird — Bob Clark's landmark 1975 thriller *Black Christmas* still stands as the quintessential Canadian stomach turner — their joyously un-PC efforts were groundbreaking.

And these days, with

Eastern promises

• Halifax-based filmmaker Jason Eisener landed on the lurid movie map in Jason 2007 after Eisener his crowd-pleasing *Hobo with a Shotgun* won the Tarantino/Rodriguez Grindhouse mock trailer contest. Now his brilliant and hilariously grotesque short film *Treevenge* will be featured at none other than the Sundance Film Festival. Go to treevenge.com for more information.



American producers opting to shoot movies like *Saw* and *Silent Hill* in our streets (even zombie master George Romero moved to Toronto in 2004) and homegrown heroes like East Coast upstart Jason Eisener drawing attention, it's only a matter of time before the term "hoser" becomes synonymous with horror once more.

"HILARIOUS!"

Kelli Gillespie, CW-TV/San Diego

"Loved It!"

Nadine Rajabi, National Lampoon TV and Comedy Radio XM

"Take Your BFF, Take Your Frenemies."

Manny De La Rosa, NBC-TV/Palm Springs

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James dreams big with Mall Cop

STEVE GOW
for Metro Canada



FEATURE After a nine year run on TV's *The King of Queens*, Kevin James now has big plans to become a movie star. To some, that may sound like a lofty goal but not to the 43-year-old comic. After all, his comedy heroes were also quite big. Literally. "Jackie Gleason was a guy who could move and was a big guy," James immediately said when asked of his idols during a recent interview. "I loved all the big guys —

(John) Belushi, (John) Candy, Chris Farley — I had a connection to those guys and being (larger) myself, I really, really enjoyed how they moved and their style."

If James doesn't achieve his heroes' level of fame, it surely isn't for lack of physical ability. In his new big-screen comedy *Paul Blart: Mall Cop* (in theatres next Friday) James plays a bumbling unarmed security guard who must defend his shopping centre from a gang of gun-wielding terrorists. In the process, he falls 45 feet through a glass skylight, gets

punched out by a woman and wipes out into several large objects.

"We wanted it to be really, really physical and make it an action-comedy and we did, we went hard," said James, who also co-wrote the film. "I went crazy for this movie because I said, 'this is my idea, if I'm going to be out on the line, I'm going to push it' and we certainly did."



Kevin James in *Mall Cop*.



All new episodes
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Deacons receives pair of film nominations

For the second year in a row, Roger Deakins has picked up two nominations from the American Society of Cinematographers for his feature film work. Deakins was cited earlier this week for *Revolutionary Road* and *The Reader*. **REUTERS**

Reel Time

Walking down the aisle

Weddings are a movie staple, can define tone of film

Since the beginning of filmed entertainment, 25,367 weddings have been portrayed on the big screen.

OK, I just made that number up; it's probably way more than that. It seems the only thing people enjoy more than going to a wedding is seeing a wedding on the big screen. At least that's what the producers of this weekend's *Bride Wars* are banking on.

Weddings are a movie staple and as Katrina Onstadt pointed out on cbc.ca, they can define the tone of the whole film. "(A) movie that starts with a wedding will always be gloomier than that which ends with one," she wrote.

It's an astute observation. Comedies tend to build up to the big ceremony while dramas often use the walk down the aisle as

InFocus

Richard Crouse

mrchaos33@hotmail.com

a starting point for conflict. The elaborate wedding sequence that kicks off *The Deer Hunter* is the opening salvo in a movie Roger Ebert called "a progression from a wedding to a funeral." Once again, the going gets grim after the I do's.

Probably the most famous wedding in film history, though, is one that never gets to the vows. The wedding scene at the end of *The Graduate* is a classic but the scenes that make it memorable weren't shot as originally planned.

Director Mike Nichols originally intended for

Benjamin (Dustin Hoffman) to loudly bang on the church windows to disrupt the wedding between his love, Elaine (Katharine Ross), and her intended, but in rehearsal the windows rattled so ominously someone panicked and yelled, "Everybody out!" Hoffman suggested spreading his arms out and cautiously tapping on the glass with open hands. "The clincher," Hoffman said, "was the reviews all saying this was Benjamin's Christ moment. It was a fix. That's all it was."

In a subtler, but equally memorable, moment, Elaine and Benjamin dash from the church, laughing, fleeing convention toward an unsure future. Then, suddenly, they stop laughing as though the consequences of their actions have just sunk in. It's a powerful moment that caps a terrific movie, but

again it wasn't planned. As they shot the scene Nichols was so overbearing the two actors instinctively clammed up and sober expressions appeared on their faces. In post-production, Nichols liked their transition from cocky confidence to uncertainty so much he kept it in.

Ironically, when the film opened in Portugal censors felt the ending set a bad example for kids and clipped the last few minutes. That version ended with Elaine obeying her parents and marrying the blonde frat boy. Portuguese audiences may have missed the whole point of the movie, but at least were treated to the thing most paid to see — a big wedding scene.

Richard Crouse is the author of *Son of the 100 Best Movies You've Never Seen* and film critic for CTV's Canada AM.

Jewish resistance comes to light in Zwick's *Defiance*

Movie feature

STEVE GOW
for Metro Canada

When screenwriter Clayton Frohman first showed a newspaper obituary about a wartime Jewish resistance fighter to *Blood Diamond* director Edward Zwick, the Oscar-winning filmmaker was resistant himself.

"I said, 'the Holocaust? What more could we possibly have to add to this subject?'" Zwick said during a recent stop in Toronto.

After reading the article, however, he soon discovered a biography about said refugee and "realized that indeed there was something — a pretty glaring omission — which had to do with resistance; that the monolithic understanding that Jews had been entirely passive (during the war) was

incorrect."

With *Defiance* — in theatres next Friday — Zwick is now behind the stunning true story of Tuvia Bielski (starring Daniel Craig — taking a break from James Bond), the Jewish resistance fighter who led more than a thousand refugees through a Belarus forest battling German soldiers, starvation and bitter winters.

When the director presented a private screening for some of the survivors and ancestors of the actual event, it became clear just how important this simple obituary-originated story actually was for Zwick to tell.

"It was very interesting to show them the film," said Zwick. "A 12-year-old or a 14-year-old's memory of an event like this is obviously particular and I think for them it's been an opportunity to not just express something but to have it shaped in some way."

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Screen Times

This week's new releases are highlighted in pink.

THESE PAGES COVER MOVIE START TIMES FROM FRI., JAN. 9 TO THURS., JAN. 15. TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

HALIFAX

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Bedtime Stories (G) Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 1:20-4:10-7-9:40

Bolt (G) Dolby Stereo Fri-Thu 1:10-3:45-7-9:40

Bride Wars (PG) Stadium Seating, Dolby Stereo Fri-Thu 1:30-4:20-7:05-9:30

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (STC) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:30-1-4:30-5-8:30-9

The Day the Earth Stood Still (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 9:30

Doubt (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Sun 1:10-4-7:20-9:50 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Mon 1:10-4-9:50 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Tue-Thu 1:10-4-7:20-9:50

Four Christmases (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 9:10

Gran Torino (STC) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri-Thu 12:55-3:50-6:55-9:50

Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa (G) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 1:25-3:45-6:30

Marley & Me (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:40-12:50-3:50-4-6:40-9:35

Quantum of Solace (14) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 7-9:45

The Reader (STC) Dolby Stereo Fri-Thu 12:45-3:35-6:50-9:40

Seven Pounds (14) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:30-3:30-6:30-9:30

The Spirit (STC) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 1:05-4:05-7:05-10

The Tale of Despereaux (G) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Wed 12:50-3:20-6:35 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Thu 12:20-3:20-6:35

The Unborn (STC) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 1:20-3:55-7:20-9:55

Valkyrie (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:40-3:40-6:40-9:35

Yes Man (PG) Dolby Stereo, No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:40-3:50-6:50-9:45

IMAX

190 Chain Lake Dr., Bayers Lake
902-876-4800

The Day the Earth Stood Still: The IMAX Experience (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 1-3:40-6:55-9:45



BARRY WETCHER/TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX

Marley the dog attempts to look contrite in *Marley & Me*, which is currently in theatres.

OXFORD THEATRE

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Slumdog Millionaire (STC) Fri-Sun 6:30-9:30 Mon 9:30 Tue-Thu 6:30-9:30

PARK LANE

5657 Spring Garden Rd.
902-423-4860

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (STC) Stadium Seating Fri-Sun 12:20-3:50-7:30 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 3:50-7:30

Gran Torino (STC) No Passes, Stadium Seating Fri-Sun 12:50-3:30-7-9:40 No Passes, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 3:30-7-9:40

Marley & Me (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri-Sun 12:35-3:10-6:30-9 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 3:10-6:30-9

Milk (14) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri 12:25-3:15-6:20-9:10 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Sat 6:20-9:10 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Sun 12:25-3:15-6:20-9:10 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 3:15-6:20-9:10

La Rondine Opera (STC) Stadium Seating Sat 2

Seven Pounds (14) Stadium Seating Fri-Sun 12:30-3:20-6:40-9:25 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 3:20-6:40-9:25

Valkyrie (PG) Stadium Seating Fri-Sun 12:40-3:40-6:50-9:30 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 3:40-6:50-9:30

Yes Man (PG) Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Fri 1:10-4:05-7:20-9:45 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Sat 7:20-9:45 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Sun 1:10-4:05-7:20-9:45 Dolby Stereo, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 4:05-7:20-9:45

LOWER SACKVILLE

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Bedtime Stories (G) Stadium Seating Fri 7-9:20 Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 12:45-3:10-7-9:20 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 7-9:20

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (STC) Stadium Seating Fri 7:30 Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 12:30-4-7:30 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 7:30

Gran Torino (STC) Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri 6:30-9 Stadium Seating, No Passes Sat-Sun 12:45-3:15-6:30-9 Stadium Seating, No Passes Mon-Thu 6:30-9

Marley & Me (PG) Stadium Seating Fri 7-9:40 Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 1-3:40-7-9:40 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 7-9:40

Seven Pounds (14) Stadium

Seating Fri 6:45-9:25 Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 12:50-3:30-6:45-9:25 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 6:45-9:25

The Unborn (STC) Stadium Seating Fri 7:15-9:15 Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 1:20-3:25-7:15-9:15 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 7:15-9:15

Yes Man (PG) Stadium Seating Fri 7:10-9:40 Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 1:15-3:45-7:10-9:40 Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 7:10-9:40

DARTMOUTH

650 Portland St., 902-434-4200

Bride Wars (PG) Fri 7-9:10 Sat-Sun 2:50-7-9:10 Mon-Thu 7-9:10

Doubt (PG) Fri 6:40-9 Sat-Sun 2:20-6:40-9 Mon-Thu 6:40-9

Quantum of Solace Fri-Thu 9

The Tale of Despereaux (G) Fri 6:45 Sat-Sun 2:30-6:45 Mon-Thu 6:45

Twilight (PG) Fri 6:35-9:05 Sat-Sun 2:10-6:35-9:05 Mon-Thu 6:35-9:05

Valkyrie (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri 6:30-9:05 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Sat-Sun 2-6:30-9:05 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Mon-Thu 6:30-9:05

Yes Man (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital Fri 6:50-9:05 Dolby Stereo Digital Sat-Sun 2:40-6:50-9:05 Dolby Stereo

Digital Mon-Thu 6:50-9:05

DARTMOUTH CROSSING

145 Shubie Dr.,
902-481-3251

Bedtime Stories (G) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 1-3:50-7-9:25

Bolt in Disney Digital 3D (G) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Wed 1:15-4:10-7:10-9:40 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Thu 1:15-4:10-9:40

Bride Wars (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:45-3:20-6:40-9:10

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (STC) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:30-4:15-8

The Day the Earth Stood Still (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 6:55-9:40

Doubt (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri 1:25-4-7:15-9:40 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Sat 7:15-9:40 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Sun-Wed 1:25-4-7:15-9:40 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Thu 7:15-9:40

Gran Torino (STC) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating, No Passes Fri-Thu 1:05-4:05-7-9:55

Marley & Me (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:35-3:30-6:35-9:35

La Rondine Opera (STC) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Sat 2

Seven Pounds (14) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:30-3:25-6:30-9:30

The Tale of Despereaux (G) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 1:10-3:40

The Unborn (STC) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 1:30-4:20-7:20-9:45

Valkyrie (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Tue 1:10-3:50-6:55-9:50 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Wed 1:10-3:50-9:50 Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Thu 1:10-3:50-6:55-9:50

Yes Man (PG) Dolby Stereo Digital, Stadium Seating Fri-Thu 12:55-3:55-6:45-9:20

TRURO

20 Treaty Trail, Millbrook
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Bedtime Stories (G) Fri 7-9:10 Sat-Sun 2:30-7-9:10 Mon-Thu 7-9:10

Bride Wars (PG) Fri 6:50-9 Sat-Sun 2:40-6:50-9 Mon-Thu 6:50-9

Marley & Me (PG) Fri 6:40-9:20 Sat-Sun 2:20-6:40-9:20 Mon-Thu 6:40-9:10

Seven Pounds (14A) Fri 6:30-9:10 Sat 2:10-6:30-9:10 Sun 2:10-6:30-9 Mon-Thu 6:30-9

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (PG) Fri 7:30 Sat-Sun 2-7:30 Mon-Thu 7:30

The Unborn (14A) Fri 7:20-9:30 Sat-Sun 3-7:20-9:30 Mon-Thu 7:20-9:20

Yes Man (PG) Fri 7:10-9:30 Sat 2:50-7:10-9:30 Sun 2:50-7:10-9:20 Mon-Thu 7:10-9:20

BRIDGEWATER

349 Lahave St., 902-527-4020

Bedtime Stories (G) Fri 7-9:25 Sat-Sun 2-7-9:25 Mon-Thu 7-9:25

Bride Wars (PG) Fri 6:50-9 Sat-Sun 2:25-6:50-9 Mon-Thu 6:50-9

Marley & Me (PG) Fri 6:45-9:30 Sat-Sun 2:15-6:45-9:30 Mon-Thu 6:45-9:30

Seven Pounds (14A) Fri 6:30-9:20 Sat-Sun 2:20-6:30-9:20 Mon-Thu 6:30-9:20

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (PG) Fri 7:30 Sat-Sun 2:05-7:30 Mon-Thu 7:30

The Tale of Despereaux (G) Sat-Sun 2:30

The Unborn (14A) Fri 7:15-9:15 Sat-Sun 2:10-7:15-9:15 Mon-Thu 7:15-9:15

Yes Man (PG) Fri-Thu 6:40-9:10



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Billboard's top albums

1. Fearless, Taylor Swift, right; 2. I AM...SASHA FIERCE, Beyoncé; 3. 808s and Heartbreak, Kanye West; 4. Twilight Soundtrack, Various Artists; 5. Dark Horse, Nickelback. REUTERS



Music

Elliott Brood mines past

CHELSEA MIYA
for Metro Canada



Eighth grade history class might seem like the last place you'd expect a future rock star to find inspiration. But it was one barrel-chested teacher's enthusiastic stories about Canadian figures like Louis Riel that helped spur the imagination of a young Mark Sasso.

Today, the frontman for critically acclaimed Toronto alt-country outfit Elliott Brood is capturing the attention of fans worldwide with his epic revival of old world Canadian heroes on his band's sophomore LP *Mountain Meadows*, which was released in June. "I was never a math whiz," said Sasso. "Stories always spoke to me. It gives you an identity. Knowing what your ties are, you feel a kindred spirit with your country. You're already Canadian, but you feel it that much more."

Elliott Brood can best be described as folk-rock seared with some country flavour and peppered with, "The soul of Motown and the heavier stuff from Detroit," according to Sasso. The influence for such sound came from the experience of growing up in Windsor, Ont., as well as the inevitable influences that come from spending lengthy periods of time on



After wrapping up a North America touring stint Elliott Brood is set for a series of gigs in France and the Netherlands. The band's latest album, *Mountain Meadows*, was released in June.

the road. "You try to take it in and be a part of it in some way," said Sasso. "Our new album was influenced by everything from Henry Ford to small town ghost stories to family history. It's almost like acting. You put yourself into a different character and imagine how they would react."

Fireside storytellers armed with banjos, ukuleles and harmonicas, trekking across Canada and picking up bits of local history along the way, the men behind Elliott Brood — Sasso, guitarist Casey Laforet and drummer Stephen Pitkin — could easily be described

"Our new album was influenced by everything from Henry Ford to small town ghost stories to family history."

frontman Mark Sasso

as modern frontiersmen.

Crying out from beneath Sasso's face-twisting bluegrass howl is the heartbeat of Canada's old frontier: Greasy boots stomping on a dusty cabin floor, the wheezy whistle of a train, the clank-clank of railway workers driving stakes into

the ground, the creak of a wooden wheel, the slosh of mud, the whisper of prairie grass. It's history coming to life through music.

"There's a place in Lethbridge we used to play," said Sasso. "The basement used to be an opium den from when they were building the first railway across Canada. They were talking about ghosts, so we decided to check it out. It was almost like a time capsule. They'd left it just the way it was, so there were rusted beds and old mattresses. It can instantly bring you back. It's almost like the best museum because it's real."

New iTunes — More questions than answers

SoundCheck

Alan Cross

alan@ongoinghistory.com

We've had a couple of days to digest the big announcement from Apple at Macworld about the significant changes to iTunes, starting in April.

First, there were three tiers of pricing. Older tracks will be discounted, selling for 69 cents. Newer and more popular tracks will go for either 99 cents or \$1.29. This is something the record labels have been screaming for. They've wanted variable pricing.

But the second announcement is the big one: No more digital locks on the songs.

If you've ever tried to share a song you bought from iTunes with a friend, you'll know you can't. Everything is locked to you, your computer and your device. But with no digital rights management or DRM, you can do whatever you want with a music file: Move it from device to device, burn copies and share it with friends.

And it wasn't Apple that

wanted to keep DRM in place. Steve Jobs was calling for an end to digital locks as far back as February 2007. It took this long for all the labels to agree to drop the copy protection.

But what about all the songs you've already purchased from iTunes? I myself have hundreds. The good news is that we'll be able to upgrade them to DRM-free versions — but for 30 cents a song. That's still gonna hurt, but at least you can jailbreak the songs you want.

And that's still not all. When DRM disappears in April, any company can now make a music player that will work with iTunes. Up until now, the only portable players that worked with iTunes were all the flavours of iPod. Not anymore.

Question: What does this mean for the record labels now that DRM is effectively dead? They won't be able to control how consumers buy and listen to and share music.

Question: Will people respond to the variable pricing strategy? Let's face it, the only people this will affect will be those who already pay for music. And soon, there will be more DRM-free music out there.

The Ongoing History of New Music can be heard on stations across Canada. Read more at ongoinghistory.com and exploremusic.com

Metro recommends

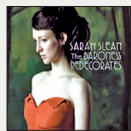
• **ANTONY AND THE JOHNSONS, ANOTHER WORLD EP:**

Vibrato-voiced eccentric tones down his haunting sound for unique, somber piano ballads and bawdy blues ramblin'.



• **SARAH SLEAN, THE BARONESS REDECORATES:**

T.O. chanteuse invigorates her sound with classical strings for a lush on this collection of tracks cut from her album *The Baroness*.



• **DAVE MATTHEWS BAND, DMB LIVE TRAX VOL. 13:**

This fun-filled June 2008 show held at a Colorado baseball stadium includes impressive covers of classic Neil Young and Sly & the Family Stone cuts.



METRO NEWS SERVICES

PUBLIC MEETINGS

School Review: St. Patrick's-Alexandra

The Halifax Regional School Board is currently conducting a school review of St. Patrick's-Alexandra School, a grade Primary to nine school in Halifax.

In accordance with the *Education Act and Regulations*, an Impact Assessment Report has been prepared looking at potential options regarding the future of the school.

A Study Committee has been formed and responded to the *Impact Assessment Report*.

As part of the process, the school board will hold public meetings to give the public an opportunity to make representations to the Study Committee's response.

The meetings will take place at the following times:

Monday, January 12, 2009, 7 p.m.
St. Patrick's-Alexandra School
2277 Maitland Street, Halifax

(If necessary)

Tuesday, January 13, 2009, 7 p.m.
St. Patrick's-Alexandra School
2277 Maitland Street, Halifax

Members of the public interested in making a representation should contact the Halifax Regional School Board at 464-2000 ext. 2321 or by e-mailing corporatesecretary@hrsb.ns.ca.



Halifax Regional
School Board

A copy of the *Impact Assessment Report* and the Study Committee's response can be found on the board's web site at www.hrsb.ns.ca/content/id/1030.html or by contacting the board using the information listed above.

A decision on the school review of St. Patrick's-Alexandra School will be made by the school board no later than March 31, 2009.

The board could decide, among other things, to:

- keep the school open;
- consolidate the school, or a part of the school, with another public school; or
- permanently close the school.



Looks like Donna Martin will return to 90210 after all. Tori Spelling is in “final negotiations” to return to the world’s most famous zip code, a show rep confirmed to People magazine. **PEOPLE.COM**

Television

TV’s six degrees of separation

Intel**l**egion



Rick McGinnis

rick.mcginnis@metronews.ca

ONE THING LEADS TO ANOTHER: This week’s TV news contains a string of items that seem to effortlessly

segue into each other, so who am I to be an obstacle to such elegance? First off is a Variety story on the latest feint by NBC at pretending it’s a network that cares about programming, a drama about a man on his way to rock bottom who starts hearing music in his head that provides a clue to the direction he should be taking, at which point a new piece of music takes its

“(NBC’s new show) has been given the simple but straightforward title Soundtrack, and actually sounds like a half-decent idea.”

place. “I was trying to find a way to combine TV and music in an organic way,” said writer and creator Jared Bush. “What we come to realize in the show is this guy has been given an opportunity to start his life over, and this music will help him find a way to become truly happy.” The show — which gives an explicit shout-out to the

music supervisor who’ll have to dig up and clear the tunes for the storyline — has been given the simple but straightforward title Soundtrack, and actually sounds like a half-decent idea ... **QUITE UNLIKE ...** Dancing To The Music In My Head is the new EP by Sanjaya Malakar, which has just been released. Does anyone remember Sanjaya Malakar? Two years is a long time in American Idol terms, and it’s hard not to look back on the more-hair-than-voice season six contestant as a symbol of our onetime irrational exuberance, like easy mortgages and high-risk mutual funds.

WHICH BRINGS ME TO: Former Idol executive producer Nigel Lythgoe, expressing his disapproval of the addition of a fourth judge to the Idol panel this season. “At this stage when we have this dysfunctional family of Ryan, Randy, Paula and Si-

mon,” Lythgoe told the National Ledger website, describing his reaction to the casting of songwriter Kara DioGuardi. “You introduce someone else into that and it’s like bringing a daughter-in-law into the family. You don’t know if she’s going to get in the way.” “It’s something that I fought for a number of years simply because once you’ve been told you suck by one judge, you don’t need to hear it from another three,” Lythgoe said. I would disagree; if something or someone sucks, you can’t say it enough times, usually because you’re dealing with gargantuan self-esteem that begs to be nuked. And thus we have a Sanjaya record, two years after the fact; I rest my case.

Rick McGinnis writes about music, movies, books and television, but not opera.

Howie Mandel goes undercover

TELEVISION Howie Mandel tosses his hat into the hidden-camera arena with Howie Do It, a reasonably entertaining piece of whimsy. The show premieres on NBC on Friday, and simultaneously in Canada on Global Television. The improbable “it” guy of the moment — thanks to the monumental success of Deal or No Deal — has an annoying habit of always reacting to his own jokes. But the actual situations are fairly clever, and the marks are treated with a degree of quasi-humanity, if not exactly respect.

There’s the poor schmo working for a singing telegram service who is sent, in a bunny suit, to what he discovers is a funeral (actually a set up with actors). He’s forced to sing For He’s a Jolly Good

Fellow to the corpse as his grieving widow whimpers nonstop in the front row. Mandel does a lot of heavy lifting in the skits himself, only to reveal his bald-pated identity at the conclusion. He looks to be having a good time, the victims slightly less so.



Howie Mandel

REUTERS

GlobalStyle



Kenya Hunt

Read Kenya, exclusively at metronews.ca/globalstyle

Entertainment in brief

TELEVISION Considering the jump-the-shark pronouncements that accompanied season six of 24 two years ago, the clamour for the return of Fox’s real-time thriller has been notably muted. The good news is that the now customary two-night, four-hour kickoff on Sunday and Monday finds the series returning to its heart-in-

your-throat best, replete with old villains, intricate conspiracies, moral quandaries and political intrigue. What easily could have devolved into self-parody has again become a riveting thriller that hits the ground sprinting. Of course the name of the show is “24” not “4” so a wait-and-see approach sounds apt.

REUTERS

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

HA	H	D	B	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
prime time	31	31	31	ABC	News (N)	ABC Wld News	Inside Edition	Chronicle	Wife Swap (N)	Supernanny (N)		20/20 (N)
	7	7	7	ASN	The Road to Avonlea		Instant Star	TMZ (N)	Wife Swap (N)	Supernanny (N)		Stargate SG-1
	11	11	11	CBC	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	Rick Mercer	Marketplace	Just for Laughs (N)	CBC News: The National		The Hour
	32	32	32	CBS	News (N)	Evening News	The Insider (N)	Entertainment	Ghost Whisperer (N)	Flashpoint "Eagle Two"		NUMB3RS (N)
	6	6	6	CIHF	Entertainment	ET Canada	NUMB3RS (HDTV) (N)		Howie Do It "Pilot" (N)	Friday Night Lights		News (N)
	9	9	9	CJCH	etalk	Hollywood	Raising the Bar "Pilot"		Ghost Whisperer (N)	Flashpoint "Eagle Two"		News (N)
	36	36	36	FOX	Deal-No Deal	The Simpsons	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Bruce Almighty ** (2003, Comedy)	Jim Carrey.		Fox First
	12	12	12	NBC	News (N)	NBC News	Hollywood	Extra (N)	Howie Do It "Pilot" (N)	Lipstick Jungle (N)		Dateline NBC
	55	55	55	SCOR	Hockey Talk	Game On	World Cup of Poker		WWE SmackDown!			Score Tonight
	53	53	53	TSN	Off the Record	SportsCentre	NBA Basketball Memphis Grizzlies at Toronto Raptors. (HDTV) (Live)					SportsCentre
sports	16	16	16	A&E	Cold Case Files		CSI: Miami "Shootout"		CSI: Miami (HDTV)			CSI: Miami
	70	70	70	APTN	News		Mixed Blessing	First Nation	Rabbit Fall	The Rez		Girl, Interrupted ** (1999, Drama)
	37	37	37	BRVO	Street Legal		Promise to the Dead		Bravo! Fact	Books-Film		All About My Mother (1999, Drama)
	49	49	49	COM	Laughs	Comedy Now	Air Farce	Good Morning	Corner Gas	22 Minutes		The Simpsons
	18	18	18	CNN	(5) The Situation Room		Lou Dobbs Tonight		Campbell Brown: No Bias			Larry King Live
	38	38	38	DISC	How It's Made	How It's Made	Daily Planet (N)		Discovery Project Earth			Man vs. Wild "Siberia"
	34	48	48	HGTV	Holmes on Homes		House Hunters	Property Virgin	House Hunters	Extreme Home		Extreme Living
	46	46	46	HIST	Urban Legends	Urban Legends	NCIS "Escaped"		Shockwave			Urban Legends
	17	17	17	MM	Gossip Girl		Brooke Knows	Brooke Knows	Video on Trial	Video on Trial		XXX: State of the Union (2005, Action)
	206	206	206	PIX	King-Marvin	(7:45) National Lampoon's Senior Trip (1995, Comedy)			Screaming Rm.			Natural Born Killers (1994, Crime Drama)
cable variety	39	39	39	SHOW	Wife Swap		The Outer Limits		Da Vinci's Inquest			Testees
	40	40	40	SLICE	X-Weighted		Til Debt-Part	Rich Poor	In Laws	Newlywed		Wedding SOS
	21	21	21	TLC	What Not to Wear		Real Simple. Real Life.		What Not to Wear			Wedding SOS
	22	22	22	W	Style by Jury	Style by Jury	Will & Grace	Friends	The Closer "Homewrecker"			Legally Blonde 2
	27	27	27	YTV	iCarly	Prank Patrol	Scorpion	Aquamarine ** (2006, Comedy-Drama)	Sara Paxton.			(10:45) Falcon Beach

HA	H	D	B	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
prime time	31	31	31	ABC	News (N)	Wld News Sat	Legend of the Seeker		The Bachelor			True Beauty
	7	7	7	ASN	The Road to Avonlea		The Burial Society ** (2002, Suspense)	Rob LaBelle.		Comedy Now	Comedy Inc.	Hockey Brawl
	11	11	11	CBC	Sat. Report	Hockey Night	NHL Hockey: Regional -- Rangers at Senators, Maple Leafs at Flyers or Capitals at Canadiens					NHL Hockey
	32	32	32	CBS	NFL Football: AFC Divisional Playoff -- Ravens at Titans		Game Show	Game Show	Criminal Minds (HDTV)			48 Hr. Mystery
	6	6	6	CIHF	Sabrina's Law		Zero Hour		Mob Stories			News (N)
	9	9	9	CJCH	NFL Football: AFC Divisional Playoff -- Ravens at Titans		Seinfeld	NFL Pregame	NFL Football NFC Divisional Playoff -- Arizona Cardinals at Carolina Panthers.			
	36	36	36	FOX	Friends	Friends			NFL Football NFC Divisional Playoff -- Arizona Cardinals at Carolina Panthers.			
	12	12	12	NBC	News (N)	NBC News	Access Hollywood (N)		Crusoe (HDTV)		Law & Order "Strike"	Law/Ord SVU
	55	55	55	SCOR	Score Update	Footy Show	BodogFight		Strikeforce		Score on NFL	Footy Show
	53	53	53	TSN	SportsCentre		E:60 (N)		Curling Casino Rama Skins Game -- Semifinal. (HDTV) (Live)			Score Update
sports	16	16	16	A&E	CSI: Miami (HDTV)		CSI: Miami "Camp Fear"		CSI: Miami (HDTV)		CSI: Miami "Bunk"	The Sopranos
	70	70	70	APTN	Cooking-Wifmn	MYTV	Music Speaks	The Mix	Rez Bluez "Soulfully Bluez"		Leaving Normal *** (1992, Drama)	
	37	37	37	BRVO	Arts & Minds	Bravo/Videos	Live at the Rehearsal Hall		That's My Time Stand-Up		Cheaper by the Dozen (2003, Comedy)	
	49	49	49	COM	Laughs	Comics!	Just for Laughs		Corner Gas	Blue Collar TV		The Simpsons
	18	18	18	CNN	This Week in Politics		Lou Dobbs This Week (HDTV)		Special Investigations			Larry King Live
	38	38	38	DISC	How It's Made	How It's Made	Cash Cab (N)	Out in the Cold	Toughest Race: Iditarod			Destroyed
	34	48	48	HGTV	Holmes on Homes		Colin & Justin's Home Heist		Top Design			Million Dollar Listing
	46	46	46	HIST	The Real Da Vinci Code		NCIS "Probie"		Ancestors	Ancestors		The General's Daughter (1999, Suspense)
	17	17	17	MM	Chris Brown: Up Close		XXX: State of the Union ** (2005, Action)	Ice Cube.				Muchmusic Countdown
	206	206	206	PIX	(6:30) The Quest **		(8:10) Last Man Standing ** (1996, Crime Drama)					Midnight Express (1978, Docudrama)
cable variety	39	39	39	SHOW	NUMB3RS "Trust Metric"		Mutant X		The Wrong Guy ** (1998, Comedy)	Dave Foley.		Fast & Furious
	40	40	40	SLICE	Beautfl People	Mr. Friday	Last 10	Last 10	Party Mamas	Party Mamas		Inside Hollywood (DVS)
	21	21	21	TLC	What Not to Wear		My First Home	My First Home	Jon & Kate	Jon & Kate		My First Home
	22	22	22	W	Hwd 10 Best	Last Holiday ** (2006, Comedy)	Queen Latifah, Gérard Depardieu.					Beauty Shop ** (2005, Comedy)
	27	27	27	YTV	Kid vs. Kat	Kid vs. Kat	Team Galaxy	Team Galaxy	Zixx Level	Storm Hawks		Naruto

HA	H	D	B	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
prime time	31	31	31	ABC	News (N)	ABC News	Funniest Home Videos		Extreme Makeover: Home		Desperate Housewives	Brothers
	7	7	7	ASN	Young Blades		Golden Globes Red Carpet		Million Dollar Password		Cold Case (HDTV) (N)	Medium
	11	11	11	CBC	Heartland (N) (DVS)		Dragon's Den (N)		Being Erica "Dr. Tom"		CBC News: Sunday Night (N)	fifth estate
	32	32	32	CBS	NFL Football: AFC Divisional Playoff -- Chargers at Steelers		Million Dollar Password		Million Dollar Password		Cold Case (HDTV) (N)	The Unit
	6	6	6	CIHF	16:9 Picture	The Simpsons	(8:01) Brothers & Sisters (N)		24 Tony Almeida is responsible for a terrifying threat. (N)			News (N)
	9	9	9	CJCH	Law & Order: SVU		Desperate Housewives		The 66th Annual Golden Globe Awards (HDTV) (Live)			
	36	36	36	FOX	Cold Case		The Simpsons	The Simpsons	24 Tony Almeida is responsible for a terrifying threat. (N)			Fox First
	12	12	12	NBC	News (N)	NBC News	Golden Globes Red Carpet		The 66th Annual Golden Globe Awards (HDTV) (Live)			
	55	55	55	SCOR	Score Update		The WWE Experience		BodogFight		Strikeforce	Poker
	53	53	53	TSN	NFL Football: AFC Divisional Playoff -- Chargers at Steelers		NHL Hockey St. Louis Blues at Edmonton Oilers. (HDTV) (Live)					
sports	16	16	16	A&E	CSI: Miami "Camp Fear"		CSI: Miami "Burned"		CSI: Miami (HDTV)		CSI: Miami "Sunblock"	CSI: Miami
	70	70	70	APTN	Great Towns	MYTV	Rez Bluez "Soulfully Bluez"		Music Speaks	The Mix		Coyote Waits (2003, Mystery)
	37	37	37	BRVO	Mad Men		Arts & Minds	Bravo! Fact	Territories			Scoop ** (2006, Romance-Comedy)
	49	49	49	COM	Laughs	Comics!	Winnipeg Comedy Festival		Laughs	Rick Mercer		The Simpsons
	18	18	18	CNN	Lou Dobbs This Week (HDTV)		Newsroom		Special Investigations			Larry King Live
	38	38	38	DISC	Cash Cab	How It's Made	MythBusters		Fireball of Tutankhamun			Secrets of the Crystal Cave
	34	48	48	HGTV	Holmes on Homes		House Hunters	House Hunters	Property Virgin	Buy Me		Extreme Makeover: Home
	46	46	46	HIST	Pearl Harbor: Who Fired First		NCIS "Model Behavior"		Braveheart's Scotland			Braveheart (1995, Historical Drama)
	17	17	17	MM	Brooke Knows	Meet Barkers	50 Cent: Money and Power		So You Think You Can Dance			Dance
	206	206	206	PIX	(6:15) True Crime (1999, Crime Drama)		Montana Moon ** (1930, Western)					Heaven and Earth (1993, Docudrama)
cable variety	39	39	39	SHOW	TBA	Trailer Park	The Guard (HDTV)		Love Notes (2007, Drama)	Laura Leighton, Antonio Cupo.		Catwoman *
	40	40	40	SLICE	Tori & Dean	Newlywed	Rich Bride, Poor Bride		Til Debt-Part	Wedding SOS		End of Leash
	21	21	21	TLC	The New Detectives		Mystery Diagnosis		Mystery Diagnosis			Spoiled Rotten
	22	22	22	W	Beauty Shop	Hwd 10 Best	Grocery Bag	Style by Jury	Ambulance Girl (2005, Comedy-Drama)	Kathy Bates.		Biggest Loser
	27	27	27	YTV	Alex Rider: Operation Stormbreaker ** (2006, Action)				SpongeBob	Prank Patrol		Mystery Diagnosis

Kanye's mother's surgeon sentenced

The plastic surgeon who operated on Kanye West's mother the day before she died has been sentenced to a year in jail for drunken driving. USMAGAZINE.COM

**Television**

Watchmen verdict wanted

Flick could face release injunction as Fox and Warner Bros. battle in court

Jan. 20 could be D-day in the Watchmen dispute between Fox and Warner Bros.

Or rather I-day, when the studios have agreed to let a judge decide whether to issue an injunction against the superhero film's scheduled March 6 release by Warner Bros.

But Warners is asking that the hearing be moved up to as early as Monday because "time is critical," the studio argues in papers filed this week. The studio must soon commit tens of millions of dollars in marketing for a film it isn't sure it can release.

The injunction fight stems from U.S. District Court Judge Gary Feess' Christmas Eve preliminary ruling that Fox has a right to distribute the Zack Snyder adaptation of the popular graphic novel. Feess found that producer Lawrence Gordon failed to acquire Fox's entire inter-



The release of Watchmen hangs in the balance as the fight for its rights is battled out in court.

est in Watchmen after the studio abandoned the project a decade ago.

The studios are now battling over the key issue of whether that decision allows Fox to stop the film's release or whether the parties should proceed to a trial over monetary damages.

The studios laid out their arguments in papers

filed this week. Warners cites a precedent-setting decision involving eBay that says a plaintiff in a copyright-infringement case must, among other things, prove that it will be irreparably harmed without an injunction and that money damages will not be an adequate remedy.

In fact, Warners claims,

the opposite is true in this case. While Fox had "abandoned" the Watchmen property, Warners claims it has spent more than \$150 million to make and market the film in a "carefully choreographed" plan to pique moviegoer interest March 6. Barring the release would do grave damage to Warners and third parties like ex-

hibitors who are counting on the movie, the studio argues.

Fox claims that the eBay case does not apply in this instance and that Warners' infringement of its rights entitles it to stop the release.

A status conference is scheduled for Friday morning in Feess' Los Angeles courtroom to determine when the hearing will take place. Warners is seeking to bring witnesses to the proceeding, while Fox instead wants Feess to stop the release based on arguments submitted to the judge in writing. The hearing is expected to last two to three days.

If the injunction is granted, Warners would be barred from releasing the film, though it likely would appeal immediately. Feess has encouraged the parties to settle the dispute. Fox initially filed suit in February. **REUTERS**

Beatles music pulled from podcasts

NORWAY Norway's national broadcaster has pulled a series of 212 podcasts each featuring a different song by the Beatles. The podcasts would have essentially constituted giving away the entire Beatles catalog for free.

Although the band's music has not been licensed for the Internet, NRK said on Tuesday that its 2007 radio series "Our Daily Beatles" would be made available as a free podcast. Each installment features the story behind a Beatles track; a version without music ran as a podcast in 2007.

The broadcaster planned to make all 212 episodes available by the end of the month, but 14 episodes were briefly made available to download. It then emerged that NRK's rights agreement with music-label trade group IFPI allows only podcasts from shows broadcast in the previous four weeks. **REUTERS**

Screenwriters guild nominates best scripts

WRITING Hollywood screenwriters Wednesday named nominees for 2008's best film scripts with a few surprises among the movies vying for honours ahead of the industry's highest awards — the Oscars in February.

The Writers Guild of America nominated for best original screenplay Milk, written by Dustin Lance Black and telling of the life of slain gay rights activist Harvey Milk, along with Robert Siegel's The Wrestler, which looks at the

life of a faded sports star.

Those writers will be joined by veteran Woody Allen with romantic comedy Vicky Cristina Barcelona, brothers Joel and Ethan Coen for another comedy, Burn After Reading, and Tom McCarthy with immigration tale The Visitor.

In the best adapted screenplay category, the Writers Guild nominated Eric Roth for The Curious Case of Benjamin Button, about a man who ages backward, John Patrick Shanley with sex abuse drama

Doubt and Simon Beaufoy for Slumdog Millionaire, which tells of a young Indian man who competes to win a fortune on a television game show.

Joining those film writers in the adapted screenplay group are brothers Jonathan and Christopher Nolan for their Batman movie, The Dark Knight, and Peter Morgan with Frost/Nixon, which recounts the interviews by British TV host David Frost of disgraced U.S. President Richard Nixon. **REUTERS**

LEGENDARY HOCKEY HEROES

Steve Shutt (HOF)
Billy Smith (HOF)
Bryan Trottier (HOF)
Dale Hawerchuk (HOF)
Gary Leeman
Bob Bourne
Cliff Ronning
Ron Hoggarth (Referee)
Rod Black (TSN) ...and more!*

* Players are subject to change.

In aid of: the Nova Scotia Hearing and Speech Foundation "Sound Start Program"

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Wed, January 14, 2009
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24 movies&entertainment

Going Out

Mix of Six

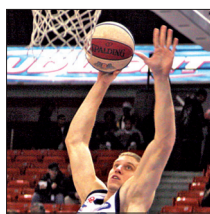
HOT & HAPPENING WEEKEND EVENTS

For more great events, visit: metronews.ca/entertainment

Halifax Rainmen

When: Friday, 7 p.m.
Where: Metro Centre
Tickets: \$30 for floor seats, \$18 for adults and \$11 for kids under 12; available at ticketatlantic.com or at the Metro Centre box office.

Basketball's back in Halifax! The Halifax Rain-



men open at home Friday night against the Quebec Kebs. They beat the Kebs 101-95 last week in the season opener — their first game in the Premier Basketball League. Will they do it again?



Sinatra tribute

When: Friday, 7:30 p.m.
Where: The Rebecca Cohn Auditorium
Tickets: \$32 to \$47.50.

Love to croon along with Sinatra? Daniel Matto and the jazzy Joel Chiasson Trio offer up their tribute to Ol' Blue Eyes. Visit artscentre.dal.ca.

11th annual African Nova Scotian music awards show

When: Saturday, 7 p.m.
Where: Casino Nova Scotia's Schooner Showroom
Tickets: \$28.25, taxes incl.; call 451-1221.

Dutch Robinson, along with Asia, NuGruv and Afro Musica will play the 11th annual



African Nova Scotian music awards show. Come check out up-and-coming musical talent!

Telescope lecture

When: Friday, 7:30 p.m.
Where: Scotiabank Theatre in the SMU Sobeys Building

Heyyyy, what's your sign? It's the International Year of Astronomy, and on Saturday night, Saint Mary's University astronomy and physics professor Marcin Sawicki will give a free lecture on the history and evolution of the telescope. A must-do for stargazers.



The Veil

When: Thursday, Jan. 15
Where: Neptune's Studio Theatre

See The Veil before it flies off to Tehran. It's the story of a Persian princess' trip from the palace harem to Europe, and her return to Iran, a country forever changed by revolution. Onelight Theatre is taking its award-winning production to the Fajdr International Theatre Festival, and it's holding a series of fundraising performances to help it get there. Four special shows at Neptune's Studio Theatre will start Thursday; tickets are \$17, and you can buy them at onelighttheatre.com.

when you set a lunch date with C100 you can order what ever you want! It's the All Request Lunch and Adam Marriott's got the menu. you choose the times. Mon-day to Fri-day 12 til 1. Spend an hour and a half with C100 we'll play exactly what you want to hear. 451-13-13 or your requests C100FM.com. A full and yours lunch hour of requests could win you for two from All Greek To Quinpool Road. Authentic Experience! Got lunch plans? ...Thought so!

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movies&entertainment 25

Going Out

Metro's 7th Heaven: Metro taps what's hot right now1 **Batman**

The people have voted and The Dark Knight swept through the People's Choice Awards. The latest Batman movie picked up all five awards it was nominated, including favourite movie.

2 **Revamped Golden Globe statue**

The Golden Globe statue has a new look. The new statuettes were unveiled at a press conference on Tuesday, which Society Awards headed to make it sturdier and more visually appealing. The Golden Globe Awards will be on this Sunday.

3 **Fight on New Year's**

Lindsay Lohan and Samantha Ronson rang in the New Year with a bang, literally. The two stars were seen fighting at Miami International Airport over the holidays before flying back to L.A., reports tmz.com. It's been brewing that the two broke up, but Lohan denies it.

5 **No Angie vs. Jen?**

Brad Pitt has announced that there is no feud happening between his current girlfriend and ex-wife, reports intouchweekly.com. He says Jen is still a part of his life and that they "check in" with each other.

4 **Daredevil couple's baby**

The media is abuzz with news of Jennifer Garner and Ben Affleck's newest addition to the family. Their second daughter was born Tuesday in Los Angeles, reports people.com. The pregnancy was confirmed by the couple in August.

6 **Twilight's next movie**

For Twilight fans the cast for the sequel, New Moon, are trickling in. Everyone's favourite vampire Robert Pattinson will be back, as well as Kristen Stewart, reports people.com. The movie is scheduled for release this fall.

7 **Celebrity Apprentice '09**

Donald Trump is back with another new round of celebrities in the second season of this show, reports tvguide.com. Guests include comedian Tom Green, musician Clint Black and Olympian Scott Hamilton.

ABC News cuts back its presence in Iraq, saying it will rely more on BBC

TELEVISION ABC News is reducing its full-time presence in Iraq, and will rely more on the BBC for day-to-day reports from inside the country.

The network will continue to have a Baghdad bureau, though there will be no full-time correspondent and fewer employees than there have been since the war began in 2003. Its move comes at a time when the broadcast networks face slimmer budgets and an intensifying war in Afghanistan.

The Iraq War, even with 130,000 U.S. troops remaining there, has fallen mostly off the front pages and top-of-the-evening newscasts. Troop deaths are down and so is the amount of time that the networks have devoted to the story in the election year just past.

"We will have a presence but significantly less than there was before," an ABC News executive who declined to be identified told The Hollywood Reporter. "This is more of a reallocation of resources so we're

not spending money for a substantial presence on the ground waiting for something to happen."

ABC News has had a long-term content sharing plan with the BBC, the only U.S. network to do so. The Baghdad bureaus have cost the broadcast networks millions of dollars annually since 2003 with no end in sight. The networks have had to budget not only for reporting and production teams but also for support staff and heavy security.

REUTERS

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Celebrity Buzz

No Gossip Girl role for Nicole

CAREER Sorry Upper East Siders: Nicole Richie won't be joining the cast of *Gossip Girl* any time soon, us-magazine.com says.

Richie's rep tells the website that it's "not true" she's planning to guest star on the CW show. Rumors began after a New York newspaper reported that Richie "loves *Gossip Girl* and she wants a really b—hy, juicy role."

Richie played a bully on NBC's *Chuck* earlier this season. She's currently focusing on her House of Harlow jewelry line.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Piven's mercury story in doubt

CAREER The folks behind Jeremy Piven's aborted Broadway run in *Speed the Plow* may be looking to recoup their investment. Piven abruptly left the show last month because of "mercury poisoning" from eating too much sushi. To the investors, the whole thing sounds fishy, according to the New York Post.

Producers for the show revealed that Piven has been examined by another doctor to get a second opinion, and if it turns out he's playing sick, they may be able to "squeeze some money out of him," a source said.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Amy serenades fling

RELATIONSHIP Amy Winehouse serenaded her new man in a hotel bar on Wednesday, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The troubled singer dedicated her impromptu performance to budding actor Josh Bowman at a Caribbean hotel bar.

A guest at the hotel revealed: "When she finished playing, she rushed over to Josh and was hugging and

kissing him. Her voice was amazing. Josh was obviously impressed. They were all over each other."

Amy played the piano and sang to the 25 guests in the early hours of Wednesday morning.

Josh, 21, has denied rumours he is romantically involved with the married star after pictures of the couple cuddling in St Lucia were published this week.

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ScarJo's unusual Spice Girl goals

PEOPLE Scarlett Johansson is a "Stay-at-home-and-veg Spice," reports femalefirst.co.uk

The 24-year-old actress admits she felt terrible watching husband, Canadian Ryan Reynolds, compete in the New York Marathon last year because she doesn't have the energy to do it herself.

She said: "I went to some random spot and saw everybody going past. It was really incredible. I'm a horrible runner — I can barely put one foot in front of the other."

"I saw that Jennifer Lopez did a triathlon and I'm like, 'Damn, girl, you just had twins!' It's amazing."

Referring to the nicknames the

Spice Girls gave themselves — Posh Spice, Ginger Spice, Sporty Spice, Baby Spice and Scary Spice — Scarlett added: "I'm so not a Sporty Spice — I'm a stay-at-home-and-veg Spice."

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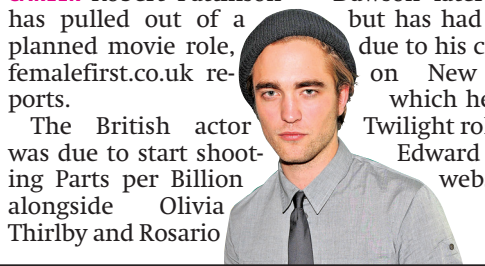
Pattinson pulls out of planned role

CAREER Robert Pattinson has pulled out of a planned movie role, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The British actor was due to start shooting *Parts per Billion* alongside Olivia Thirlby and Rosario

Dawson later this month but has had to withdraw due to his commitments on *New Moon*, in which he reprises his Twilight role as vampire Edward Cullen, the website says.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



King of Bel Air?

PEOPLE Bel Air has a new, not-so-fresh prince, eonline.com reports.

Michael Jackson is currently holed up in the tiny Los Angeles neighborhood after inking a year-long lease on a \$100,000 US-per-month French chateau built in 2002, the website says.

Jackson's rep, Tohme Tohme, called the gated property "a little bit more than an average home" and said that the possibly returning King of Pop has been living there for about a month.

Thome said the Thriller singer moved back to L.A. to be closer to Holly-

wood and showbiz in general.

"He might want to build his own dream house, although the real estate market isn't very good right now," Tohme told the Los Angeles Times, which reported that Jackson's current digs are a French chateau with seven bedrooms, 13 bathrooms, 12 fireplaces, a wine cellar, a theater and a library.

Jackson, who had been living mainly in Las Vegas since returning to the United States about two years ago, finally let go of his idling Neverland Ranch in November.

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Mario dishes on his first kiss with Fergie

PEOPLE While Stacy (Fergie) Ferguson and actor Josh Duhamel make final preparations for their weekend nuptials, *Extra* host Mario Lopez can't wait to share in their happy day, people.com reports.

And Lopez has a special bond with Fergie: Both were one other's first kiss in the '80s, when they

starred on *Kids Incorporated*. "It's a true story. I'm very proud of my

first kiss," says Lopez. "She says there was no tongue!"

But there was a romance, albeit brief, for the youngsters. "I wrote her a note and, as she likes to point out, I was very smooth at 10 because I bought her perfume," Lopez says, laughing. "I think the gesture was pretty good for a kid."

Once the young romance fizzled, a friendship blossomed. "I'm happy to say Stacy has stayed just as sweet as when we were kids," Lopez says.

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I'll find Mr. Right, Ellen tells Anne

PEOPLE Having tiptoed around her dating life, Anne Hathaway was cornered by Ellen DeGeneres on the subject of Mr. Right, people.com reports.

"If you need someone, I will find you a boyfriend," the TV host told the actress on the *Ellen DeGeneres Show*. "I'm really good at it."

"Did you see how nervous I just got?" responded Hathaway.

"You don't even have to date," advises DeGeneres.

"You can go straight to commitment."

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Kidman can't watch own films

PEOPLE Nicole Kidman can't bear to watch herself onscreen. The actress claims the only films of hers she has watched are those directed by Baz Luhrmann. "I saw *Moulin Rouge*. I've really only seen (*Moulin Rouge*) and (*Australia*) in my whole career," Kidman told Australian radio station 2dayFM. "It gets worse as I get older."

Kidman recounted how uncomfortable the *Australia* premiere made her: "I can't look at this movie and be proud of what I've done ... It's just impossible for me to connect to it emotionally at all."

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ROGERS Exclusive Download to Win Contest

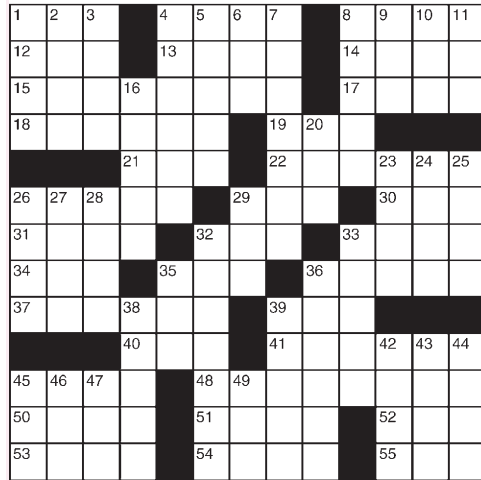


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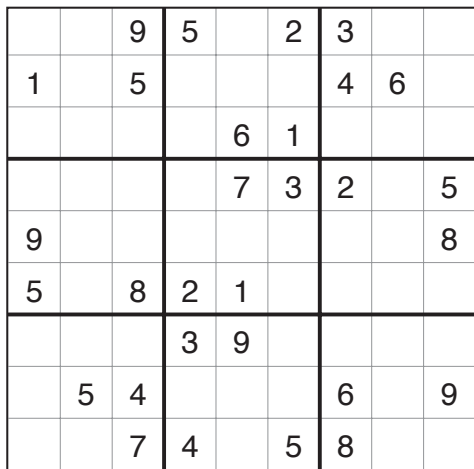
No purchase necessary. Contest closes January 31, 2009. Go to rogers.com/rockurphone for contest rules. Text messages charges apply.



For more delicious Metro recipes, visit: metronews.ca/food

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.



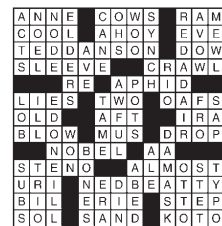
Crossword across

- 1 Wool wearer
4 Out of harm's way
8 Forehead
12 Prune
13 Mountain goat
14 Discourteous
15 Somewhat buried (in)
17 Prayer closer
18 Breastbones
19 Legislation
21 Jewel
22 Dormant
26 Mixed metal
29 Marceau char-
acter
30 One of the kin
31 "Give a —, don't pollute"
32 Oppositionist
33 Minor players
34 Past
35 Candle matter
36 Hiawatha's craft
37 Flock loser
39 Scratch
40 Pod occupant
41 Wears away
45 Poolroom supply

Crossword down

- 1 Benevolent
2 Refuses to
3 Duel tool
4 Director Lumet
5 Perpendicular, at sea
6 Retainer
7 Clarify
8 Barroom set-to
9 Pirates' quaff
10 "— on a Grecian Urn"
11 Rune equivalent to a W
16 Grain disease
20 Cleo's slayer
23 Black, to Browning?
24 Therefore
25 Sit for a shot
26 Moby's pursuer
27 Trademark symbol
28 Aerobic maneuver
29 Carton
32 Skilled
33 Ersatz chocolate
35 Teensy
36
Kidderminster, e.g.
38 — salts
39 Bumps into
42 Campus VIP
43 Slithery
44 Detail, for short
45 Upper limit
46 E.T.'s vessel
47 Before
49 Corn spike

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:



8	4	1	5	6	3	2	7	9
2	6	5	9	7	4	1	8	3
9	7	3	8	1	2	6	5	4
1	8	2	3	9	6	5	4	7
5	9	7	4	8	1	3	2	6
6	3	4	7	2	5	9	1	8
3	2	6	1	4	7	8	9	5
7	1	9	6	5	8	4	3	2
4	5	8	2	3	9	7	6	1

Find today's answers + play more games at metronews.ca

SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:

- Under 13 minGenius
13-17 minScholar
17-21 minSmart
21-25 minNot bad
25+ minKeep practising

Take Five

Metro Recipe of the Day



Mackerel with Dill Mayonnaise

INGREDIENTS:

- A small bunch of fresh dill
1 1/2 lb (680 g) new potatoes
Salt
1 tsp (5 ml) mixed peppercorns
Oil for greasing
4 mackerel fillets, 6 oz (170 g) each
4 tbsp (60 ml) mayonnaise
4 tbsp (60 ml) natural Greek yogurt
1 tbsp (15 ml) capers

GARNISH:

- 1 lemon

METHOD:

- Put kettle of water on to boil. Rinse and dry dill, remove fine fronds from stalks, and set both aside separately.
- Scrub new potatoes and put into large saucepan with some salt and the dill stalks. Cover potatoes with boiling water from kettle, return to boil, and cook for 15–20 minutes.
- Meanwhile, preheat grill to high. Crush peppercorns with mortar and pestle or rolling pin.

Lightly oil grill rack, lay fillets on it, skin sides down, and sprinkle with peppercorns.
4. Grill fillets for 5 minutes, then turn over, reduce heat to medium, and grill for another 5 minutes, or until skins are blistered. Turn over once more and grill for a further 2 minutes.
5. While fish is cooking, blend mayonnaise and yogurt in a bowl. Chop dill fronds and capers, and mix in. Cut lemon into wedges and set aside.
6. When mackerel is cooked, sprinkle flesh sides with salt. Drain potatoes and remove dill stalks. Serve mackerel with potatoes, dill, mayonnaise and lemon wedges.

SERVES 4



Horoscopes

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
Concentrate on solving a confidentiality issue. Be kind to a worryingly inconsistent person. Accusations about excessive spending will disturb you.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
A gloomy guy is working out a solution. A careless observer reminds you of the past. A starving person's trustworthiness will shock you.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
Being protective will provoke an odd response. Someone's complaints will be irritating. Turning down a greedy relative gives you self-respect.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
Meditate to understand a tedious caller. Don't take advantage of anyone. A manager can clear the air.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Don't thwart any plans to make money. A cantankerous guy leaves annoying messages. Things will fall into place at home.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
A persuasive guy inspires a spectacular argument. An older person will disturb your sleep. Hope arises for a daring action.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
Use good manners with an insatiable friend. Listening well takes care of a problem. An opportunity is discovered by mistake.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
You can help a secretly sad woman. Don't buy new computer equipment yet. You'll face a standoff with an ailing person.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
You'll be the winner of a battle with bureaucracy. A private rendezvous will be maddening. Take no notice of someone's feigned indifference.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
A word of encouragement will perk you right up. A friend will tell you anything at this point. The chance of a lifetime will be presented.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Stand alone if you want to see the big picture. A hypocrite causes a misunderstanding. An intimidating person supports your ideas.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
A futuristic vision is at stake. You'll inspire some good ideas. A man's backstabbing words will be held up to ridicule.

AVATAR VENUS

This day in history

- JAN. 9, 475: Byzantine Emperor Zeno is forced to flee his capital at Constantinople.
JAN. 9, 1349: The Jewish population of Basel, Switzerland, believed by the residents to be the cause of the ongoing bubonic plague, were rounded up and incinerated.
JAN. 9, 1431: Judges' investigations for the trial of Joan of Arc begin in Rouen, France, the seat of the English occupation government.
JAN. 9, 1799: British Prime Minister William Pitt introduces income tax to raise funds for the war against Napoleon.

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